

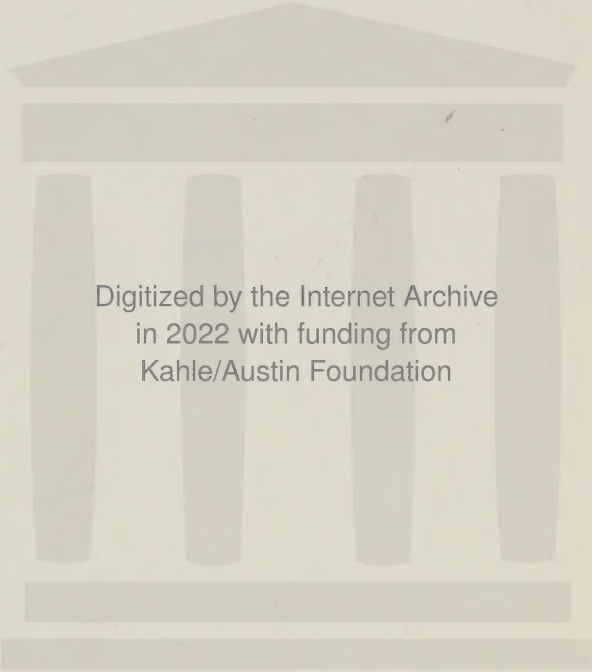


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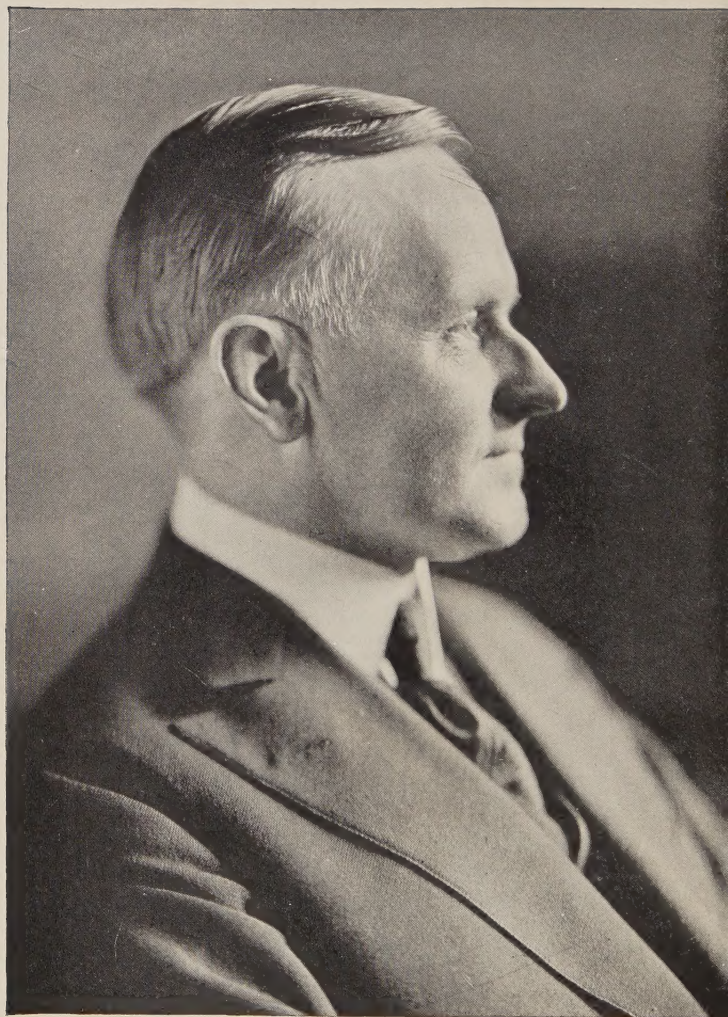
THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

*By the same  
Author*

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**The Log of a Non-Combatant  
New Facts on Lincoln**





Chas. Coolidge

# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

BY  
HORACE GREEN

ILLUSTRATED



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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

After much of the following material had been gathered, and some of it set down, it was discovered that others were far advanced in similar tasks. In many respects the author felt insufficiently equipped. Yet he had the leverage of distance and the unqualified backing of publishers in the conviction, long held, that most modern biographers place too much emphasis on their own opinions and too little emphasis on the best opinions of others. In other words less writing, but more selecting and editing, are apt to give a more rounded picture. No one witness can accurately describe an objective fact like a street-car accident. Much less can one person hope to describe a subjective human being—especially where that person is living and private letters are, therefore, not available. This particular witness started in the Green Mountains and re-lived, so far as he could, the life of Coolidge at Plymouth and Ludlow, Vermont; at Amherst and Northampton and Boston, Massachusetts; re-traveled, as Coolidge did,

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

the back routes between these places, and finally returned to the trail in Washington, D. C. But he frequently adjusted his own eyesight by looking through the lenses of others.

In addition to those mentioned in the foot-notes, thanks are due to Professor Edwin C. Grosvenor of Amherst; Colonel John C. Coolidge of Plymouth; the Honorable Benjamin Loring Young, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives; Commissioner Henry F. Long and Frank Hall of Boston; Judge Henry P. Field, Miss Caroline Yale and Miss E. M. Willoughby of Northampton; Frank Waterman Stearns; General John H. Sherburne; James B. Reynolds; Edward T. Clark, the President's private secretary; the Honorable Andrew J. Peters, former Mayor of Boston, and his secretary, E. V. B. Parke; to E. T. G., especially for the Coolidge genealogy; and to "The Forum" for permission to reprint several chapters.

Washington, D. C.  
March 1924.



THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE



# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

## CHAPTER I.

### COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

#### I.

AMONG American statesmen whom Calvin Coolidge most admires, and whom in certain traits of character—and fate—he undoubtedly resembles, the name of Lincoln is often mentioned. For public men of this generation to hang their hat on the Lincoln peg is so common a practice, that comparison of the Great Emancipator with the slim Vermonter is sometimes attributed to friends more prejudiced than wise. Investigation reveals similarities, but scarcely more than that. Lincoln's mother died when the lad was nine years old; his step-mother, Sarah Bush Lincoln, was the only mother he could remember. Coolidge's mother died when the boy was twelve; he was also fortunate in having a devoted step-mother, to whom he attributes much that is of value in his up-bringing.

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Lincoln became known in some measure through his gift of pithy expression, of restating political and moral truths upon which many people were already agreed. Likewise Coolidge. In the case of neither has the output been spontaneous, but rather the product of painful drilling on a single thought. Compared with others of their time, neither stands out as an orator. Lincoln's enemies called him "a low-down, cunning clown." "Who is this trickster in politics?" asked Wendell Phillips. Coolidge's enemies describe him as a canny, ward politician. "A cold, narrow, unenlightened, reactionary . . . made by a myth," asserts the *New York Nation*, "a man whose political utterances reveal no spark of originality . . . only intellectual nakedness."

Had not a great moral crisis, which he was peculiarly fitted to handle, arisen contemporaneous with his years of vigor, Lincoln might well have remained a mediocre State Senator. It is easy to imagine that a Washington, a Roosevelt, or a Clemenceau would force himself into prominence in any age or circumstances. Not so Lincoln, and much less so Coolidge. Had it not been for the police strike, for Murray Crane, Frank W. Stearns, Coolidge might also have remained a mediocre State Senator.

These comparisons are not put down for the sake of emphasizing a Lincoln-Coolidge likeness:

## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

a foolish measure of estimate for an acting President, and certainly unwelcome to Coolidge. But they are sufficient to show *where* the line of reasoning started.

We know that the Greeks chose their generals with reference primarily to those on whom the gods smiled. Under that score Coolidge would have been general of the combined armies.

Does that make any difference? Suppose that the Boston police had refused to strike, and that Coolidge had returned to the northern half of No. 21 Massasoit Street, Northampton, a highly respected, ex-governor? Or that he had been at the New Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., during Mr. Harding's illness, and that the country had missed that legend-provoking scene of taking the oath in the three-room cottage by the light of a kerosene lamp? In Massachusetts his good fortune is such a byword—one repeats the story with due reverence—that when the news of his Vice Presidential election trickled over the wires, Ralph Hemenway, his law partner exclaimed: "With Cal's luck, I'd hate to be in Mr. Harding's shoes!"

What of it? Has the fact been entirely overlooked that whenever Luck came round the corner, Coolidge spoke up, "May I have this?" and stood there, ready to take Her by the arm?

# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

## II.

Coolidge's immediate genealogy is as clear as the waters of the Black River, near whose banks he was born. The Presidential Coolidges are not closely related to the aristocratic Boston family of the same name, in spite of the fact that as Mr. Coolidge became prominent, increasing efforts were made (not by him) to establish the fact. It is said that the Back Bay Coolidges turned up their noses at the upstate Senator with the nasal drawl and glum manners, while the latter no doubt reciprocated with a slight elevation of his own proboscis.

It is, nevertheless, established that all American branches are descended from the original John Coolidge, who was born in Cambridge in 1604, who with his wife and infant son, came to America in about 1630, and settled in Watertown, Massachusetts. The family dates back to 1495 in England. John Coolidge is first mentioned in the Watertown records in 1636. He was granted land by the town, bought more, was admitted freeman, and many times elected a selectman. He must have been a man of education, as he was frequently called in to sign wills, witness deeds, etc. Part of the frame of the original house, brought from England, is still standing in Watertown. He left property, five sons and three daughters.



*From the family album, courtesy of Colonel Coolidge*

Colonel John C. Coolidge, the President's father      Victoria J. Moor Coolidge, mother of the President





## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

His descendants crop up at various times in the history of Watertown. These appear as a farmer, a carpenter, a soldier in King Phillips War, a Justice of the Peace who was called esquire, and left 760 pounds 188 shillings "and certain fine properties," also a soldier in the Revolutionary War, a Harvard graduate, a Harvard L.L.D., who thereafter became light headed in deportment (obviously no relative of the President), an inn holder, and a deacon. The son of the original John took "Oath of Fidelitie" in 1652, and acquired—not simultaneously—two wives and fourteen children. One Jonathan Coolidge of the third generation was a member of Captain Goof's Company in the expedition against the Spanish West Indies; they encamped on the Island of Cuba, where he was "one of those who did not desert but remained faithful unto his duty."

Between the Watertown and Boston Coolidges and the Coolidges of Vermont, there is a distinct gap. For six generations the latter have lived, and for three generations they have died, within a stone's throw of Cilley's general store at Plymouth Notch, where the President was born. The originator of this line was a John Coolidge, of Lancaster, who married Anne Priest, of Marlboro, and moved to Plymouth soon after the War of the Revolution, probably in 1780 or 1781. The line

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

then is: Calvin Coolidge, born about 1780; Calvin Galusha Coolidge, born about 1815; and Colonel John Calvin Coolidge, born in 1845, the President's father.

In April, 1923, the then Vice President wrote the following:

Mrs. Almon W. Coolidge,  
Rochester, New York.

My Dear Mrs. Coolidge:—

"I have your interesting letter. I have no doubt that your letter was from my father, who is John C. Coolidge and writes a very even hand. There was a Josiah born in 1718, as you say. I suppose he is the father of John Coolidge who was married in Lancaster September '77 or '78, and went to Plymouth, Vt. soon after 1780. This John was my grandfather's grandfather. There was an Obediah named in the census of Plymouth in 1790. I never knew who he was.

"I should be very much pleased to get your authority for your statement that John was the son of Josiah. John died in 1822 and was at that time 66, which would make him born in 1756." \* \* \* "The whole family is nearly all gone. John had five children. Some of his descendants live in Atlanta, Ga. Some are in the West. Some are at Ludlow, Vt.

"I am very much interested in finding out how you know who the children of Josiah were, for I have never been able to be certain who the father of John was and, of course, who his brothers and sisters were.

Sincerely yours,  
(CALVIN COOLIDGE.)"

To Guy Coolidge, of Hobart, Coolidge, then Vice President, wrote at another time:

## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

"When I was a boy, a tradition in my family was that we were relatives of the Jonas Coolidge family, but that there had been some falling out between them and the Luther Coolidges (the latter therefore, spelled their name with an "e"). Luther was a son of John. Luther's brother, Calvin, was my great-grandfather, and his family always kept the "i".

The President's grandfather, as noted above, was Calvin Galusha Coolidge, an unusual name. Vermont history reveals a Galusha who fought in the Battle of Bennington, was an elector at various times between 1820 and 1829, and Governor of Vermont in 1809 and 1819. Perhaps the latter was connected on the paternal grandmother's side. There was also a Carlos Coolidge, who was Governor of Vermont in 1849 and 1850.

Of less distinction are the President's immediate forbears. They were respectable, contented farmers and storekeepers. The farming was a hand-to-mouth proposition, from plow to user, so to speak, rather than for transportation and sale, with its modern problems. Grandfather Galusha was this sort of farmer, and the President's father, John Calvin Coolidge in addition to storekeeper was at various times notary public, deputy sheriff, constable, selectman and state assessor chosen from the little community. He also served in both branches of the state legislature, and became "Colonel" by virtue of being on the staff of former Governor W. W. Stickney.

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

Of great men seek the mother. This seems true in the case of Coolidge. She was Victoria Josephine Moor, and, as mentioned, died when Calvin was thirteen years of age. His stepmother was Carrie G. Brown who died in 1920. About the mother's ancestry, though she was of substantial New England stock, there is less recorded. Even in the little family tintypes you can see where the President got his compressed lips, the droop at the corners of the mouth, the restful eyes. A schoolmate of Coolidge's told the writer that a composite picture of the President in various activities was like "looking at both his father and mother only you saw more of the mother."

### III.

From every corner of the state—and from other states—the people come. Limousines and lesser lizzies stand outside. The Colonel himself opens the door. They come in hesitating, gaping, drinking in the scene, while the Colonel hurries his refrain: "Battleboro? Yes, Ma'am. I've heard the name. You are now standing where he took the oath. That is the table; here is the Bible. He was under the lamp facing toward the door. Now if you care to sign the book so the next lady can have the pen . . ."

Sometimes there are many, sometimes few.

## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

Over three hundred came on one day in August. Toward evening they taper off and the Colonel, a conscientious host, goes to the rocker. One night when the crowd had gone he sat in the back room faced by the setting sun. Slowly, very slowly, he fingered the leaves of a little album, and stopped—at a face as sweet and true as you have ever seen.

“His mother was a good woman,” murmured the old Colonel. And after a solid minute’s pause, “Yes, a good woman. I haven’t looked at these pictures for nearly 15 years.”

### IV.

The name Plymouth suggests a fair-sized settlement. The impression is the result of erroneous association with Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Plymouth, England.

Interminably the train winds along the Connecticut River. North of Hartford the inland Express to Boston goes through Springfield. Here a fifteen-minute connection. Eight minutes late; no time for breakfast, except a package of potato chips, fresh fried (last week), and a “nice red apple” from the sandwich man. Northward again on the White River Junction local, through Holyoke and Northampton. Small Connecticut manufacturing towns give way to the flat farm lands of lower Massachusetts; turnips and corn

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

stalks go by, drying tobacco leaves stick out through sheds with every other plank removed. Above Holyoke the fields are hillier, the air crisper; the leaves and the conductor both get redder.

Bellows Falls, at last. Here the junction where the railroad to Springfield intersects the line from Boston and the Coast. Another change of cars, and twenty minutes for dinner-lunch. The counter stools are occupied. There is a table in the corner all set for the brakeman. He shouts "Mawnin'" to the red-faced girl behind the check apron; in a jiffy steak, apple pie and cheese are inside the engine, and he and his tooth pick are telling the girl good-bye.

Change cars for the local northwestward to Ludlow. Now the fields are still hillier, the foliage becomes scarlet, the voices are snappier, cheeks seem even redder. The news dealer owns the smoking car.

"Goin' to see the old man? *Sure* he'll talk if you strike him right. But say! I'm in wrong with the President, I am. Don't happen to be acquainted, you know—he ain't been up much the last few years. The other day on the Burlington route it was kind of crowded, and I seen a man sittin' down in my seat, and puttin' his truck on top of my papers. I bawled out to him 'What



## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

the h—— do you think this is,' and grabs the stuff from under him.

"Pretty soon they tell me the Vice President of the whole United States was in my car. Just been over to his father-in-law's funeral at Burlington. Gosh! Pretty soon I see him sittin' readin' the paper right in the seat where I bawled him out! I sneaked by the seat, and the Vice President gave me a grin out of the corner of his mouth. So I guess there ain't much harm done."

Ludlow, Vermont, the nearest railroad to Plymouth, a clean looking town, with a couple of mills, a couple of taverns, a couple of drug stores and a  $\frac{1}{2}$  a dozen streets, situated in a valley surrounded by the greenest of the Green Mountains. Blindfolded, a native would know it. The air has a tang like the voices of its inhabitants; crisp yet calm, friendly yet reserved, moving slowly, yet with a purpose. The mill machinery buzzes, but contentedly. Okemo Tavern provides one good bed and three good meals for three dollars. So the stranger is also content. The Black River, not thirty yards broad, moves silently down the valley; above it floats the smoke of the noon train, mingling with the smell of burning leaves. One recalls Coolidge's words:

"Vermont is my birthright. Here, one gets close to Nature, in the mountains, in the brooks the waters of which hurry to the sea; in the lakes,

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

shining like silver in their green setting; fields tilled, not by machinery, but by the brain and hand of man. My folks are happy and contented. They belong to themselves, live within their income, and fear no man."

A machine known as the "Ford" carries you the rest of the way along those lakes, literally "shining like silver in their green setting." Along one of them lives Dan McCuen, genial dwarf, who went to school with Calvin. What McCuen says he most recollects is that, "Cal was a right smart fisherman—seemed to have a knack of waiting for 'em."

Mr. Ford's equipage honks around the bends with as much publicity as his one time presidential boom, grinds uphill past the store that constitutes Plymouth Union, to what was and still is known as Plymouth "Notch."

In these surroundings, the President was born on July 4th, 1872, in a back room of Cilley's. To-day the front of the store is painted and prosperous, with postal photographs for souvenir hunters, and the rear annex where Calvin lay is being reshingled. A half a century ago, minus visitors, telephone, or automobile, it must have been bare enough.

John Calvin Coolidge's well-known aversion to verbosity, according to one informant, was the result of a psychological experiment, or more likely

## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

a mesmeric accident on the night of this birth. Although unable to corroborate the incident at the hands of his father or his aunt, Mrs. J. J. Wilder, there is here given an account from the tender, Boswellic pen of the Honorable R. M. Washburn.<sup>1</sup>:—

“The baubles which divert and stimulate the prosaic young seemingly had no charm for him, nor did anything which tender hearts or wise heads could plan. He lay in his new bed and cried and when he had tired of crying, he wept and then he cried again. All this apparently with deliberation and for a purpose and as a means to an end. For the first effort of the child and the man has been always, not to play but to think.

“A mother solicitous through unselfish love sat by his side, intent upon bringing him peace; and a father with the more selfish purpose of sleep. The family physician bent over the crib with that rural versatility which had familiarized him with the whole gamut of bodily afflictions, from rheumatics to melancholia. Noted psychologists too were added to the throng, not alone for the advancement of medical science, but with the hope of solving a problem which seemed to baffle all.

“These all followed his infant gaze as it swept the plain walls of that Vermont farmhouse. They watched his eyes as they rested and became riveted upon the only decoration in that room, a portrait of the Great Liberator of the Dutch, of the low lands of Holland, a Prince and a Count of Nassau, William the Silent. And they gave it to the child.

“Then peace came to that household and to its mother. . . . And the child studied the face and the features of the portrait and then, placing the end of one of his small fore-fingers upon the mouth of that great prince and the other upon one of his

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<sup>1</sup>“Calvin Coolidge: His First Biography.”

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

ears, he too was content and happy, and he too slept, and peace overwhelmed that small house and that small family.

"And those who sat about the child construed the lessons of what they had seen to be; first, that he would leave the hill country of his birth and also live close to his adopted meadowlands along the banks of the Connecticut; and second, that he fastened the hopes of the political success that was to be his upon the determination, not to talk but to listen, not upon the power of speech, but upon the possibilities of silence. From that hour he then became and has since continued, Calvin the Silent."

When Calvin was thirteen years old he tied a leather strap around Greenough's Latin Grammer and the small Bible his mother had given him, and walked the eleven miles to the Black River Academy at Ludlow. At the "Notch" he had received his preliminary lessons at the district school, interspersed with farm chores, and a little learning at his mother's knee. Ludlow was the nearest seat of learning to Plymouth. The Coolidge trait of wasting no time in circumlocution had already set in. Unfortunately, neither he nor anyone else realized that greatness was in store. Biographical evidence is therefore difficult to obtain. He was, of course, auburn-haired, of lighter shade than at present, but never the fireman's red. Neither was his temperament fiery red. Always calm, unruffled, thoughtful—never jumpy, nervous, nor containing the quality known as "pep." He was never the big raw-boned

## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

country boy, nor uncouth in manner or dress. At the Academy, he is described as neater than the others, something of a dandy for those surroundings.

The school house is on a high bank above the river. It is a good-sized, three-floor, red brick building, with a belfry, and, now, a new annex. The bell tolls at 8:45. Now-a-days the kids with hands on shoulders, march in to the tune of the "Wooden Soldiers" from a phonograph in an upper window. In those days there was no phonograph. While the others raced in from tag or prisoner's base, Coolidge was in his seat reading.

The belfry is celebrated. One morning when Coolidge was in his second year at school there had been some deviltry or other, and the principal threatened to toll the school bell early. He sent the bell puller to the tower. Yank! The bell wouldn't ring. Investigation revealed that a small-sized jackass had been taken up three flights into the tower and tied to the bell rope! The conspirators have not been revealed. Who did it remains today a secret far safer than Tut-ankhamens'. It is known, however, that a well-known Massachusetts legislator and well-known merchant were involved. A few months ago there was a meeting of the Trustees of the Black River Academy—among them Frank W. Agan, classmate and former friend of the President, who

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

runs the biggest mill in the section; Colonel R. E. Hathorne, Captain E. A. Howe, and others. It was suggested that after all these years it was time to tell the names of the mule party. Agan jumped to his feet with the statement that, "in view of *present public events*, it was more than ever important to respect the pledge of silence." Although the implication is obvious—especially when the non-communicative, not to say, secretive nature of the person is considered—there is only one way to settle the question. That is, to burst into a Cabinet meeting and put it to the President. His answer, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt's story, would undoubtedly be, "Silence.—And d—— little of that!"

Miss C. Ellen Dunbar, who was Calvin's teacher, is quoted by Joseph Toye as follows:

"I taught Cal when he was eight years old. He looked as sedate then as he does today. His has been a peculiar personality from the cradle. If you had called him 'Judge' when he was a little boy it would have fitted him well. He had a deeply thoughtful mind almost from babyhood. I knew his parents before he was born. Those who meet Cal today speak of his apparent aloofness. He was the same with his school-mates.

"I never knew Calvin to get into mischief. He didn't play much with the other boys, not because there was any unfriendliness, but what appealed to them didn't appeal to him. Calvin was trained not to bring his troubles to his mother. He kept them to himself. His mother was sick and mustn't be worried. John Coolidge was wonderful to his women. Cal-





*From the family album, courtesy of Colonel Coolidge*  
The President at the age of seven



*From the family album, courtesy of Colonel Coolidge*  
Coolidge's sister Abigail who died at the  
age of thirteen





## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

vin's sister died in her father's arms, of what would be called appendicitis today.

"Calvin gets a lot of his characteristics from his grandmother, Almeda Coolidge. As school teacher I used to board around. I lived for a long time with Calvin's parents and also with his grandmother. Almeda Brewer Coolidge was a widow when I knew her and had a wonderfully friendly personality. She had the greatest way of finding out all you knew; Cal's that way, too. I wasn't in Almeda's house three days before she had me turned inside out—knew everything I knew. Cal's like her that way. And I never heard Almeda Coolidge criticise her neighbors.

"I remember Calvin at school. He studied. It was the job. It was to be done, so do it. Cal wasn't brilliant. If I were asked to describe him at that time I would say 'Good little boy, good in school.' If I said 'Do that,' he did it, not half-did it. With Cal, law and order began with strict obedience to parents—with no questions asked. With him 'to be a man' was the thing, not to be CALLED a man. When he was a little boy he was Calvin Coolidge of today in miniature, except that now his mouth shuts down a little tighter. Calvin Coolidge can't dodge his heredity or his long years of training. He wouldn't lie to save himself from the gallows."

### V.

In these youthful estimates appears a baffling note. "Cal never was a world beater"; "Wasn't any better or any worse than anyone else"; "Ought to do well enough," are the various comments heard. The inquirer attributes it to resentment or even jealousy—until the truth dawns that it is the essence of pride, both in the things of Vermont and

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

in the institutions of America. "He's one of us" they seem to say; "why shouldn't he be President?"

The father's random remarks are typical: "He never got into much trouble. . . . No, I never remember to have spanked him . . . a pretty good lad . . . used to read a lot, handy around the farm . . . yes, it was in Calvin's thirteenth year that his mother died. Let me see, his grandfather died when Calvin was about six; his sister Abbey—let's see, that is Abbey in the tin-type—she died March 6, 1890, when she was fourteen. He had no brothers. Lost his mother and his only sister within four years. So he went around by himself, mostly."

Possibly these bereavements at a sensitive age deepened that taciturnity which has become the Coolidge legend. Certain it is that the boy, thoughtful by nature, was thrown more than ever on himself to ponder the meaning of life, and its endings. Shyness, may have been a contributing factor. To an intimate of later years the President confessed that if he heard voices of neighbors in the parlor, his almost irresistible impulse was to slip in by the back door unobserved. But particularly in the habit of reticence, broken by slaty epigrams, does he reveal traits of the soil; for the smaller the community, the less is small talk honored. Above all, the silences have the somber quality of the hills from which he springs: fruit-

## COMPARISONS AND BACKGROUNDS

ful, clean and unperturbed. They resemble, too, the little Black River, smoothly, peacefully,—at times, when necessary to achieve its purpose, a little slyly—but with unutterable confidence, flowing, always flowing, on its own mysterious mission to the sea.

## CHAPTER II.

### COLLEGE DAYS

THERE was no discussion as to whether Coolidge should go to a University. The question naturally settled itself: He was the type for whom Universities exist. Nor did he have to work his way through. "My folks . . . live within their income and fear no man." His father had a little laid by, and because of frugality—he paid two dollars a week for board—the first of the month had no terrors for the young collegian.

When he was ready for college he "naturally" started for Amherst. After two days he was taken sick and had to come home. He was sick for some time. It was decided that it was not best for him to go to college that year. He went, therefore, to St. Johnsbury Academy, one hundred miles from Plymouth, where he entered and finished with the graduating class. In the autumn of 1891 he went to Amherst, joining the class which graduated in 1895.

## COLLEGE DAYS

In Amherst, as elsewhere, it is difficult to make anything romantic out of Coolidge. His companions liked him, respected him. They left him more or less alone, as his nature called for. Now that he is renowned, they rack their brains for dramatic anecdotes to feed the biographer. His early friends are divided in two classes; first, those of retrogressive imagination whose memory decorates the youth of the now illustrious executive. This type always knew "Calvin was destined for GREAT THINGS," and give corroborative characteristics. Among them are his determined mouth, which is a fact, and his blazing red hair—which is not a fact. More honest critics saw nothing remarkable in the young man, and to this day can not understand how he got along so far.

Amherst is a typical middle New England college, thrust on a high plateau, six miles east of Northampton. Broad, quiet streets are flanked by ancient and honorable trees. Comfortable fraternity houses, including the modern ones built of Harvard brick, are designed to fit the setting. At evening the glow through crimson window curtains throws paths of soft light across the campus. The atmosphere is peaceful.

Coolidge was not immediately popular, and did not join a fraternity. In freshman and sophomore years he roomed at Mr. Troot's; in part of his junior year at Mrs. Avery's. Later, he joined the

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Amherst branch of Phi Gamma Delta. He was not athletic. Once when asked what part he had taken in college athletics, he replied: "I held the stakes." If you ask whether he was interested in dramatics the answer is a laugh. He was not musical. He did not debate. Nor did he shine with the girls. Until his senior year, one can ransack class books, club records, campus legends, without finding the usual stories of greatness in the making. But, as in later life, one factor stands out which greatly aided his personal and political development. *He gravitated naturally toward the men worth knowing and impressed himself upon them.*

Ninety-five produced representative men. There were Dwight Morrow, of J. P. Morgan and Company; Herbert L. Pratt, President of the Standard Oil Company; Dean George Olds (honorary), now President of the college in place of Meiklejohn; Augustus Post, pioneer in aerial development; Frederick H. Law; Dr. Elmer S. Newton, Principal of Western High School, Washington, D. C.; Ernest W. Hardy, of Portland, Oregon; Clinton E. Bell of Springfield; not to mention Richard F. Dana, William Boardman, Percival Deering, and others. Harlan F. Stone,<sup>1</sup> of the Columbia Law School, was in the class ahead.

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<sup>1</sup>Now Attorney-General.



*P. & A. Photo*

President Coolidge as a student at Amherst College





## COLLEGE DAYS

Morrow and Dean Olds were close to Coolidge, and dear old Professor Grosvenor early remarked upon the sterling characteristics behind that quiet, inscrutable face.

"Coolidge was a fine fellow, never troubled anybody," writes Augustus Post.

Morrow was not only a good mixer, but the accomplished member of the class. He was on "The Olio" Board, Chairman of "The Lit," a class monitor, on the class baseball team, winner of the Armstrong Essay prize, class orator, and president of the Phi Beta Kappa. The vote for Morrow as the member of the class most likely to succeed in life was so heavy as to be practically unanimous. Coolidge received only one vote, and THAT VOTE WAS MORROW'S.

Nothing happened without consulting Morrow. Therefore when the question arose as to appointing class officers, the Committee went around to Morrow's room. The Grove Oration, supposed to be delivered by the wittiest man in the class, is analogous to The Ivy Oration at Harvard, and furious flights of alleged humor at other universities.

"How about Grove Orator?" Morrow was asked. The dictum was immediate and definite.

"Coolidge is the only man," he answered; and Coolidge it was.

To this period we are also indebted for Cool-

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idge's first, and up to that time, longest speech. It came after the famous "plug hat race" in Junior year, at which, all members of the class are required to clothe themselves in raiment funereal, consisting of cutaways and top hats, plus canes—the nearest approach to sartorial perfection in the future President's entire career. The "Last Eight" in the plug hat race are required to pay for an oyster supper, and Coolidge, according to historians, having won last place by a nose, was also required to prolong the evening with a speech.

Expectation ran high. Coolidge paid for the oysters with his next three weeks' board. He then rose and turned his pockets inside out. The account of the oration, which may be found in the apocryphal history of Amherst, second edition of 'Ninety-five, set up and electrotyped in the memory of graduates only, is here repeated verbatim and in full:—"Coolidge then drawled, 'THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST', and sat down."<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that this speech, epoch making as to length, even if not revealing hitherto unknown sentiments, was the first intimation to the class as a whole, that Calvin the Clam, was more like an oyster, with its treasure of hidden pearls. Certainly by graduation day his wit, or as Dean Olds better calls it, his "wisdom touched with whimsical humor," was recognized; for in one of those impertinent circulars which college youth send

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one another, there was the question, "Are you engaged?" to which Coolidge answered, "Severally."—a retort which it was considered worthwhile to record in print. Furthermore, in answer to the question, "Who is the brightest man in the class" (in which Dwight Morrow, of course, carried off the prize with forty votes), Coolidge, Kingsland, and Sampson received honorable mention. But the most astounding feature, in view of the belief that Coolidge always spent his evenings in forward planning, is that he had as yet come to no decision as to his life's work. He gave his business or profession as "Undecided," and his plans for next year as "Nothing"; he was one of the few with no preference for any Church or sect. Only one answer was definite. Under the heading, "What political party do you prefer?" he put down "REPUBLICAN."

The Grove Oration is so called because delivered on Class Day, in a grove of trees somewhat resembling a Greek amphitheatre. Around the speaker in a semicircle, sits the graduating class, behind them Juniors, Sophomores and Freshmen; behind them, provided the shafts of judgment are not feared, members of the faculty, and others.

The object is to amuse the gathering in more ways than one; first, by cracks at various members of the faculty. It has also been an immemorial

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custom to interrupt the speaker by methods devious and underhand.

But Coolidge's he-lamb was guarded as carefully as Papyrus before the race, or, translated from the literary, the efforts to "get his goat" were without fruition. They listened with one ear. By the time Coolidge had divided the faculty in two divisions—"Christians and Gorillas"; had referred to the "late Adam" in connection with fruit consumption; and pointed out it was "not positive proof that a diploma is a wolf because it comes to you in sheep's clothing"—they settled down to give him both ears, and a round of hearty applause. He concluded with the undeniable college sentiment that later years would find them in spirit for:

"Old Amherst, doubtless always right, but right or wrong, Old Amherst!"

Coolidge was not Phi Beta Kappa, and reports to the contrary notwithstanding, didn't stand out in his studies. He did good work in Mathematics, English, and French. He read and pondered historical subjects,—made them a part of his equipment. The prize essay "Principles fought for in the American Revolution" in which he was singled out for award, in competition open to all colleges and universities, is evidence. He did not specialize, in the ordinary sense of the work. As Pro-

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fessor Grosvenor puts it: "He specialized in his own mind."

Though not athletic, Amherst's imprint on his intellect and outlook is pronounced, particularly the direction given to his mental process by Professor Charles E. Garman. Morse's teaching, according to Dean Olds, probably confirmed him in those habits of "deliberation, intellectual self-control, and a wise man's balance," which dissipate many difficult problems; while the philosophic Garman is again and again revealed in Coolidge's public addresses.

"Consciously or unconsciously," writes Dean Olds, "this teacher seems to be with him at all times. One need only instance certain salient points in Garman's teachings to make this clear to those who are familiar with 'Have Faith in Massachusetts' and other public utterances of the President. 'Weigh the evidence.' 'Process not product.' 'Carry all questions back to fundamental principles.' 'The question how answers the question what.' Furthermore, "if Coolidge's classmates could be consulted, they would surely agree on one thing about the man. The basis of his philosophy of life and the way in which he has met difficult situations in his public career was ethical."

To this we can only add the faithful description of his friend and classmate, Charles A. Andrews of Waban, Massachusetts.

"In college Coolidge was quiet, retiring, but



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always thoughtful. In one of our first math recitations the then red-headed Professor Olds, who had not yet learned our names, put a question, looking over the class to select a victim and then said, 'My red-headed brother in the second row.' Coolidge's answer was correct and was ample for Georgie, but was so brief that it needed amplification for the rest of us. Coolidge's recitations were always good, but he seldom volunteered or got into the general discussion. His intimates were few. His participation in 'outside activities' was negligible, and yet he was neither aloof nor lonely. The acquaintance of the class with Coolidge was slow in developing, but by junior year we all knew and thoroughly respected him. Before we finished college there had developed a general and well-defined opinion that he was an unusual person whose ability would carry him far in some direction or other. But that the road he was to travel was to lead through mayoralities, legislatures, governorships, and to the Presidency never occurred to any of us, I think."

At graduation Coolidge was a few days short of his twenty-third birthday. Removing his cap and gown, and folding the sheep skin within his coat, the young man crossed the Rubicon separating the plains of theory from the hard road of practice. In his case it was merely a trolley ride over the Connecticut River that winds between Amherst and Northampton.

About this time that good fortune which was ever to be his chaperone decided to take a hand



*Courtesy Dr. Elmer S. Newton*

**Class Officers, Amherst '95**

Standing, back row, left to right, Charles A. Andrews, of Waban, Mass.; and Dwight Morrow, now of J. P. Morgan & Co. Sitting, second row, left to right, are C. Coolidge, Grove Orator; Joseph Powell and William I. Boardman.





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in things. For one morning in September, 1905, he walked into the law office of Judge Henry P. Field, that fine old Yankee of the firm of Hammond and Field.

It happened that the Honorable John C. Hammond, senior member of the firm, had wandered through the grove at Amherst Commencement just as Coolidge, C., Class Jester, '95, was delivering his output of wit.

## CHAPTER III.

### NORTHAMPTON

WE NOTICED that during the last term at Amherst, Coolidge put down his business or profession as "undecided," but his political sentiments as unequivocally "Republican." Such was undoubtedly the state of his mind. But even had his intentions been definite, it is possible that an early developed sense of family diplomacy may have prevented an announcement before talking things over with his father.

During the summer he returned to Plymouth, and there the talk presumably occurred as to whether Calvin should take his place on the farm or follow a more intellectual bent. Colonel Coolidge says that he told his only son to "do what he thought best"; and adds today, "I think Calvin's judgment was probably right"—incidentally, a typical example of understatement not unknown in that region, and particularly developed in the clan of Coolidge.

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Inasmuch as Coolidge Senior had supported Coolidge Junior through the college course, it was mutually decided the young man should give himself the next lift. If the Amherst graduate had a mind to study law, he must therefore do so without Benefit of Clergy. At that time, theoretical schools of law with a high tuition fee—like graduate schools of journalism, business and economics—were coming into fashion: Columbia Law School, New York University, and Harvard, with its famous Case System, were in vogue for New Englanders. But the old-fashioned method where you “read” law in an office while making digests, aiding with summonses, cleaning inkstands, and other forms of general utility, had not yet gone by the board. In this way Coolidge studied, taking his bar examinations verbally at the end of twenty-two months.

Northampton is situated near the banks of the Connecticut River, by train about a half hour north of Springfield and a hundred and fifty miles west of Boston. Since the inland line, New York—Springfield—Boston, does not run through Northampton, it is customary to use Springfield as the junction. It is also possible to go from Northampton direct to Boston by the so-called back-route through the hills and farms; and this route Coolidge invariably followed when commuting on Mondays and Fridays to and from the

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Boston legislature. Northampton was at the time a beautiful little city of about twenty-three thousand population, half commercial, half collegiate, with Smith College on the ridges above one side of town and Amherst a half dozen miles across the river on the other side. Like Springfield, Hartford, and other New England cities, the "residences" are on the Hill, overlooking the gradually flattening expanse of the Connecticut River.

In the autumn of 1895, Coolidge therefore entered the firm of Hammond and Field. Its members were the Honorable John C. Hammond, a leader of the bar of the western part of the state, and Judge Henry P. Field.

It was logical for Coolidge to settle in Northampton. The move was in line with his natural aversion to "raomin' 'raound". The Amherst-Northampton-Holyoke trolley swings around the corner of Main Street and comes to a dead stop within a pebble's hoist of what was once Hammond and Field's, but is now the daytime habitation of Judge Field alone. The office is on the second floor of a low city block, on the ground floor of which are various shops, drug stores and soda-water purveyances. The latter are now largely patronized by Smith College young ladies ranging from sizzling sixteen to tomboy twenty—and all of them supremely unaware of mere man. The Nonatuck Savings Bank, of which Coolidge be-

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came legal adviser and later president, is a two-room institution on the street level of the same block, which is, in fact, *The* business block of Northampton. The Draper House, center of incoming and outgoing tides and talk, with its curious second floor, lounging-room lobby, is on the other side of the same street. At the corner where the trolley turns is the City Court House; on the other side, a half-alley, half-street, called Gothic Street,—presumably because no known form of architecture was ever consulted in its make-up.

On another side-street used to work the giant Phil Gleason, Democrat and Irish, and proud of it, who says that come every election day he voted early and often for Cal, no matter what politics was in the pot. It was on the street corner or in the shoemaker's shop, or in the hotel lobby, that groups of two or three gathered together to discuss local issues; and the talks were often resumed in the office of Calvin the Quiet.

We hear that Edward A. Shaw came to the same office the week following Coolidge, this being the same Shaw whom Coolidge, as Governor of Massachusetts, appointed to the Supreme Bench. While Coolidge was still digging away at Blackstone, Hammond was elected District Attorney, and Judge Field became Mayor. Coolidge's acquaintances tell us that the political atmosphere of the office was what first developed

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the future President's propensities in similar direction; but it is to be doubted that a youth who in schoolboy days won honorable mention for a political essay; who at the age of twenty made a long and impetuous speech to his Plymouth neighbors on "Freedom;" who in college won the prize for the best essay on "Principles fought for in the American Revolution;" and who had already declared himself a staunch Republican—should need much pushing into the political current. At all events, he soon drifted into the pool.

Calvin Coolidge was twenty-three when he moved to Northampton. "Then and now," according to Arnold D. Prince,<sup>1</sup> "he was retiring in disposition. Quietly, almost sadly, it seemed to some until they caught a glimpse from the shrewd, humorous eyes, he moved about the books in the law office. He rarely spoke unless spoken to, and when he did it was always briefly. Orville Prouty, the white-haired treasurer of the Nona-tuck Saving Bank, of Northampton, tells a story of an experience he had with Coolidge at that time.

"In 1895 Mr. Prouty was selectman of Hadley,

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<sup>1</sup>Several versions of the "Can Move Body" story have been told from time to time. The above, vouched for by Judge Field, is apparently the original. Inasmuch as a large part of the writer's time in Northampton was spent in verifying Coolidge stories, it seems preferable, where found correct, to give them in the original form, rather than rewriting in the pretense that they are new. Mr. Prince, of the New York Tribune, is one of those who covered the ground in 1919, shortly after the police strike flashed Coolidge's name into prominence.



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Massachusetts, a part of Northampton, his duties including some generally assigned to corners in cities like New York. One day a man was shot to death while rowing on a small lake in Mr. Prouty's jurisdiction, and the selectman went to the office of Hammond and Field to get some information. A question had arisen as to his right to move the body, and Hammond and Field, being the foremost lawyers in that part of the country, Mr. Prouty decided to consult them.

"Climbing the short flight of steps leading from Main Street into the office, Mr. Prouty found it deserted save by a slender young man at a small desk, whom he didn't know. The young man was studying a law book and replied pleasantly, when the visitor asked if 'everybody was out,' that everybody was. Apparently it never occurred to the selectman that the young man was anybody.

"Mr. Prouty moved impatiently about the office for several minutes, hoping one of the partners would come in, and when neither did, decided to explain his mission to the young man. He had an important engagement to keep right away, and the disposition of the body had to be decided at once.

"'Can move the body,' replied young Coolidge, after listening respectfully to what the selectman had to say. He didn't seem especially flattered or flustered over having been consulted on a case of such importance, and, having delivered his

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opinion, said no more. His quietness irritated his caller, who demanded to know if he 'was sure,' but young Coolidge merely replied, 'Yes, can move the body.'

"Going downstairs, the future treasurer of the Nonatuck Savings Bank met Mr. Hammond, who was just returning from lunch.

"Say, who the devil is that young tongue-tied blonde you got upstairs?" demanded the harassed selectman, after explaining his predicament. 'Doesn't he ever get excited?'

"Mr. Hammond smiled and replied:

"That young fellow isn't much when it comes to gab, but he's a hog for work. If he tells you you can move the body, you can bet your life you can. He's only been in this office a few months, but I've found out that when he says a thing is so, it is.' "

Judge Field, slender of build and white of mustache, has been described as a Kentucky Colonel. Being a fifth generation Massachusetts Yankee, he is not enthusiastic about the label. The Judge himself speaks of Coolidge as a "Vermont Yankee with a Massachusetts education,—a hard combination to beat," and continues his description to Mr. Prince as follows: "However that may be, I can not see how Calvin Coolidge gets the votes. He absolutely killed every tradition we've ever had in Massachusetts as to the qualities one must have to





*Copyright Harry Gordon*

The Northampton Law Firm at an Amherst reunion. Left to right: Judge Henry P. Field, President Coolidge, the Hon. John C. Hammond.



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be a successful and practical politician. So far as I know, he has wrecked them all. I've known him during the entire time he has lived in this city, which is during his entire political career. I've never known him to slap a man on the back once." (Everybody in Northampton will tell you this, and it is the one trait in the Governor's character which seems a surprise to them all.)

"So far as I know he has never had a nickname in his life. People who know him call him 'Cal,' but that is as far as any of them will go. He is not what you would call a mixer. He is the quietest man I ever knew.

"Why, when he was running for re-election, he didn't even make a single speech in the town. He came to vote, but no one knew he was here until they saw him at the polls. He left as quietly as he came. How do you explain it?"

Having asked the question, the judge proceeds to answer it, at least so far as he is able.

"I've never known a man who could say what he means more concisely than Coolidge. Moreover, he has an amazing faculty for reducing what he wants to say, to epigrams. No man has ever known Calvin Coolidge to go back on his word. He has lived in this city for more than twenty-three years, and you won't find a man or woman, Republican or Democrat, but will tell you that this is true. I've never known any one who was a

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better judge of men. I've never known any one who doubted his courage. I've never known a cleaner man, a more decent citizen, a more loyal friend." . . .

"Coolidge, as I have said, came to our office in 1895 to study law, after graduating from Amherst. He had been there for about three months when one day I picked up a copy of 'The Springfield Republican,' which printed an item reading something like this:

"'Calvin Coolidge, a student in the office of Hammond & Field, in Northampton, has been awarded the \$150 gold medal offered by the American Historical Society to seniors in all the American colleges for the best essay on a historical subject.'

"I took the newspaper to Coolidge's desk," Judge Field will go on, "and I asked him if he was the Calvin Coolidge mentioned in the article. He admitted that he was, and he admitted, too, that he had had the medal in his possession for six weeks. He even took it out of his desk at my request and showed it to me. When I asked him why he hadn't told us about it, he replied that he didn't know, and when I asked him if he had informed his father that he had won the medal, what do you suppose his answer was? He said:

"'No. Would you tell him?'

"Now, I say," the Judge will conclude, puffing

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heavily at his cigar, "that a man who doesn't know how to advertise better than that is thoroughly lacking in what, from a practical political view, is the essential qualification in the science of self-exploitation."

This view of Judge Field's is interesting not only because given by an office companion and shrewd observer, but particularly because presented before Coolidge held Federal office. It thus avoids the biographer's difficulty in presenting his character as others say him in the making.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the Northampton days that Coolidge became an authority on forms of government and the reasons underlying them. He came to have great faith in local self-government, belief which cropped out in later actions and speeches. He believed in the town meeting. "It has seemed to me," he said in a speech as Governor, "that the towns in this Commonwealth correspond in part to what we might call the water-tight compartments of the ship of state, and while sometimes our State Government has wavered, sometimes it has been suspended, and it has been thought that the people could not care for themselves under those conditions. Whenever that has arisen the towns of the

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<sup>1</sup>Following a visit to Judge Field, the writer received a letter in the course of which he says: "If my views were to be written again, I should probably want some of the statements modified. . . I have been misquoted so much and statements I have made have been so exaggerated, that I am shy of admitting I ever knew President Coolidge."

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Commonwealth have come to the rescue and been able to furnish the foundation and the strength on which might not only be carried on, but on which might again be erected the failing government of the Commonwealth, or the failing government of the Nation."

In this connection it is well to review the form of local government where Coolidge served his apprenticeship. Northampton has an old fashioned City Council consisting of a Board of Aldermen of seven and a Common Council of twenty-one. The members are elected annually by wards, one alderman and three councilmen from each ward. These two bodies constitute the City Council. All orders must be passed by both boards. The Mayor presides over the Board of Aldermen and has veto power. It is in fact the legislative body of the City and is similar to a Senate and House of Representatives. A councilman represents his ward in this legislative body, the Common Council, and has one vote. The elections are annual.

The City Council in a small city, finding itself in need of a legal adviser, looks around for a reputable young lawyer. It therefore elects a City Solicitor, who is really City Attorney. The salary is small, but the title agreeable. Coolidge was chosen, and some people say this was the cause of his drifting into local politics.

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The Clerk of Courts is a county office, elective, generally running for a term of five years. He is Clerk of the Supreme and Superior Courts and also Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners. Coolidge held this position by appointment from the desk of the Clerk of Courts. He served until the expiration of the term and could doubtless have received the Republican nomination and been elected to the office if he had so cared—but presumably did not desire to be tied up for so long a period.

The Republican City Committee, on which Coolidge served, consists of thirty-five men, five from each ward. It organizes with a chairman, secretary and treasurer and its business is, naturally, to look after the interests of the Republican party in Northampton, also keeping in touch with the state committee.



## CHAPTER IV.

### STEP BY STEP

TO HOLD, in a small city, the offices of councilman, city solicitor, member of the city committee, even Mayor, does not indicate a man of exceptional qualities. The mayoralty, being a one year term, is of necessity a rotating office within reach of many third-raters. Coolidge went to the state legislature in Boston in 1907-1908. The body has produced an enviable list of distinguished statesmen; on the other hand, it has also been filled with men who serve their districts in one fashion or another, and return to business or private practice, as the case may be. Politics is a passing incident. When, in 1910-1911, Coolidge came back as Northampton Mayor, and when in 1912 he returned to Boston as State Senator, his career was not yet heralded as particularly promising. It was still the period of development—unconscious strengthening of the mental and moral characteristics which were later to stand him in good stead.

## STEP BY STEP

It was not until his election as President of the State Senate that his career differed from those of hundreds of young men of his time. The election as President of the State Senate, as we shall see, was the occasion of his first important and perhaps most remarkable speech in which there occur such sentiments as: "Have faith in Massachusetts;" "Expect to be called a stand-patter, but don't be a stand-patter;" "Do the day's work;" "Give Administration a chance to catch up with legislation;" "Men do not make laws, they do but discover them;" and others.

The inside story of the election is, however, still a conundrum. Judge Field's remembrance of the event from the Northampton point of view, is about as follows:<sup>1</sup> That Coolidge was running for re-election as Senator. His election was certain. The night of the election it was suddenly learned the President of the Senate the previous term<sup>2</sup> had been beaten for re-election in his own district. It was wholly unexpected; he had looked to win easily. That same night Coolidge packed up his little black handbag. He was seen striding toward the station, his head bent against the wind.

In two days Coolidge came back from Boston.

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<sup>1</sup>Based on interview with Mr. O. H. P. Garrett, New York World, September, 1923, and repeated to the writer in substantially the same form.

<sup>2</sup>Levi Greenwood, of Gardner, Maine.

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

Two days, no more. And in his little black bag he had the signed pledges of a majority of the Senate to vote for him as President. How he did it in that time remains a problem.

Some people inform you with a smile that of course Coolidge knew "Uncle" Winthrop Murray Crane. Indeed, the nearest to an explanation one can get from any of Coolidge's Massachusetts colleagues, is that in addition to a personal campaign for President, the influence of his party leader must have been exerted. Again, there is here an example of concentration on the necessary factor.

To return to Northampton, it was even in these early days that the faculty for obtaining mysterious results was well developed. Wherever there were two methods of accomplishment—one to shout and bang about dramatic non-essentials, the other to move quietly, craftily, it may seem at times, toward the key of a given situation—Coolidge was never known to employ the former. If the comparison is permitted, one is reminded of the difference between an amateur and a well-trained news-gatherer. Where the factors in a smashing story are 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10, the expert (who through experience already knows 2, 6 and 10) gets in telephonic contact with the proper parties to give him 4 and 8. The frame-work is now complete. The amateur dashes madly about town, flushed with excitement, bulging with importance, and

## STEP BY STEP

back to the city editor. But the paper produces no story. It is not on record that Coolidge ever bulged with excitement, but he had an unerring instinct for attending to the key factors necessary to win any and every election. Nor can it be found that he wasted interest on non-essentials. Athletics, merely for the sake of athletics, he considered a non-productive effort. His answer to an athletic inquiry, it will be recalled, was, "I held the stakes, mostly." When, therefore, he exercised his body, it was in the form of movement to reach a given point. When he exercised his ambition, it was in direct line to achieve a given result. When he exercised his tongue, it was to express a necessary thought. Obviously, you say, a cold-blooded, calculating, self-centered member of the human family! Precisely the contrary, declare the few who say they know him. If you can explain the contradiction, unravel the twisted skeins of Coolidge's character, you will have solved the enigma, explained the mystery, removed a great deal of the charm.

It scarcely needs reiteration that the vast majority of Coolidge's acts were with a purpose, or at least *they fitted* him for some future purpose—which after all is two-thirds of the battle. It is said that Coolidge's knowledge of corpse etiquette, as involved in "can-move-the-body" story led to a friendship with the selectman of Hadley, and

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through him to being employed as counsel for the Nonatuck Savings Bank, of which the selectman was an officer. Coolidge not only gave to, but received from, this connection every ounce of benefit. He not only made himself an expert on state banks and banking laws, but became known as such throughout the territory.

### II.

During Northampton days, the future President also developed those human contacts which were to help him, not only at the ballot box, but in the knowledge of practical politics. Everyone has heard of James Lucey, the Northampton cobbler emeritus, to whom the President referred as my "guide, philosopher and friend" and to whom he wrote this letter—one of the first letters from the White House—shortly after Mr. Harding's death:—

The White House,  
Washington.

"My Dear Mr. Lucey:

Not often do I see or write you, but I want you to know that if it were not for you I should not be here and I want to tell you how much I love you. Do not work too much now and try to enjoy yourself in your well-earned leisure of age.

Yours sincerely,  
August 6, 1923 CALVIN COOLIDGE."

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

My dear Mr. Lucey  
Just  
Then do I see you  
or write you but  
I want you to know  
that if it were not  
for you I should  
not be here and  
I want to tell you  
how much I love  
you.

Do not work too  
much now and try  
to enjoy yourself in  
your well earned  
leisure of age.

Yours sincerely,  
Edwin Cooley

Aug 6 1892

Mr. James Lucey,  
Northampton,  
Mass..



## STEP BY STEP

Lucey is precisely what he is made out to be: a self-respecting old Irish shoemaker with a brogue, a truly philosophic vein and a run of stories whose high-spots he emphasizes by a clicking of his bony fingers. It was not long after Coolidge became President that I spent my first evening in Lucey's dusty work-shop, in a basement in the shadows of Gothic Street, where, cross-legged under a gas-jet in the corner the cobbler banged away at the leather sole of a twentieth century man. Removing a tack from his mouth, he peered suspiciously at the stranger through bushy eyebrows curling over the top of his spectacles. Fortunately I remembered Lucey's liking for a certain gentleman both taciturn and thin. Therefore, weary of brain and limb after chasing legends Coolidgian o'er New England hill and dale, I sank upon a three-legged wooden stool, silent and secretive as St. Calvin himself.

"'Tis the Prresidunt, is it"—Bang!—"that brings you here?" The biographer nods.

"And what for should the likes of me be tawkin' about the Prresidunt of the"—Bang!—"hul United States?"

The biographer shrinks.

"And what I say is that it is not for the likes of some of them (referring to another writer) to offer me money"—Bang!—"and drinks"—Bang!

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—"and what not vile stuff, to talk about the Honorable Mister Cewledge."

Silence, while the old shoemaker putters in a musty corner. Another scrutiny of the cowering visitor.

"I say there never was a finer gentleman; never a more honest; and never one that did more for a friend." This is emphasized by a crap-rollers' snap of the fingers.

"It was an honor to me when he used to come here of an evening and sit on that very stool. It was an honor when the finest Furst Lady in the land—no she was the Second Lady then—brought a message to old Mister Lucey. And it was a grreater honor when they told him his friend was leaving the station for the Capitol of the country and that Mister Lucey's presence was requested . . ." etc., etc.

Now if this sounds garrulous, it is nevertheless evident, after digesting James Lucey's talk, that it is all to good purpose. In spite of the flowing brogue, imported from the Township of Killorglin, County of Kerry, in the Emerald Isle, there is in it nothing but redounds to the credit of the Chief. What does stir Lucey's volatile temper, is the talk of "Such like individuals" (with a shake of the head toward rival neighbors) calculated to make a fool of the cobbler; or worse yet "unbecomin' to the digginety of the Prresidunt." That

## STEP BY STEP

an Irish shoemaker with an overflowing heart has for years loved a shrewd Yankee often said to have been born without a heart, is obvious to the most perfunctory investigator. It is our duty to discover by what peculiar quality Coolidge rivets to himself the friendships of such as Lucey.

One fancies that in comparison with the promissory payment type of politician, it was refreshing to vote for a man who was short on promises and long on payment. Coolidge rarely promised anything.

About the following incident Lucey is not quite clear; but it has to do with his daughter Margaret, of whom—when you get to know him—he speaks proudly. Margaret, it seems, had a high-school education and wanted to attend Smith College. She studied hard and in one of the algebra examinations passed with a better mark than any of the other local girls. But she couldn't go to college. She had not filed her application in time, or had neglected to make her scholarship appeal through the proper channels, or some such thing. At any rate, although the type for whom scholarships are made, she was a victim of the law. Coolidge heard about the matter; but said nothing. He either wrote or called on President Seeley, or both. The scholarship came. In due course the girl went. In due course she was graduated. The daughter of the village shoemaker got a Smith

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diploma, sat in Mayor Coolidge's box at the opera, and today is secretary to the Honorable Henry P. Field,—whose judgment, by the way, is good in many things outside of Court. Therefore, if Lucey were Sheriff, Coolidge could get away with murder.

Lucey tells other incidents. There is one about a parcel of land which was being sold under foreclosure, and Coolidge bought it in for one John Manning, who was a friend of Lucey's. Within twelve hours a rich German offered Coolidge \$200 more for the property than he had paid. Coolidge held the property in escrow but sold out to the German. "I ask you," says Lucey, "did Mr. Cewledge keep the money? No sir, not him. He gave it to my friend, Jawn Manning." Another one to prove that the President is not cold or stingy is told by Mr. Garrett. Lucey is talking:

" 'What is the price of the work,' he (Coolidge) asks, looking at the shoe carefully. . . . 'Well, Mr. Lucey, there is one thing about shoes you'll never learn!'

" 'And what is that?' I asked. 'And I wasn't so pleased—'cause I know how to make shoes. An' he told me a story. A long one, it was. About a plumber that charged twenty-five dollars for fixin' a drain, for which he said five dollars was for the drain and twenty dollars was for knowin' how.

## STEP BY STEP

“ ‘That’s your trouble, Mr. Lucey,’ he said. ‘You don’t charge enough. You don’t charge for knowing how.’ ”

According to the same Garrett, Coolidge was Northampton’s champion listener: listened his way into all the offices the town would give him. When the men were away at work he would wander around the poor sections and hear the lonesome housewives talk about life’s handicap. Others sparkled at the dinner table. But Phil Gleason, blacksmith, put it in a nutshell—“Cal was always a favorite o’ Ma’s.”

### III.

About Northampton there is a good deal of Coolidge folklore, true, half true, and pure imagination. Yet it is so clearly based on atmospheric fact, that the investigator, with his background of comparison, can generally detect the true note from the false.

Not long ago, at one of the capital’s most brilliant state receptions, this guest stood watch in the Blue Room of the White House while Washington’s elect, in raiment soft and costly, filed by its Chief Executive. It was the time of night when the worker’s fancy turns to bed and the loafer’s toward excitement. The long line moved slowly through the gorgeous East Room, then through

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the main corridor, where the Marine Band performed in scarlet coats, while Lincoln and Grant watched sedately from their portraits; thence through the dark-paneled state dining room from which the Roosevelt trophies<sup>1</sup> have been removed. First in the receiving line stood the official introducer, one of the Navy's most handsome elocutionists. He announced:—

“The Minister from Amazulia!”

“Mrs. Chumley Vanderchump! Mr. Chumley Vanderchump!”

“Mrs. Robbem and Justice Robbem!” etc., etc.

Behind the announcer stood the head of the parlor detective force, watching, even in these surroundings, for a sudden movement of the right hand. At the right of the receiving line, Mrs. Coolidge greeted each new-comer with a dazzling welcome, looking for all the world as if she meant it. At her left the slim and dignified New Englander, conjuring the smile that comes at the end of a sixteen-hour day. Before every tenth or twelfth greeting he licked his lips. Sometimes as he glanced backward along the unending line he must have recalled those Plymouth days when, as a boy, he heard voices in the parlor and tried to slip in by the back door unobserved.

Gradually, as the guest watched the scene, the

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<sup>1</sup>T. R.'s heads hung on the walls throughout the Wilson and Harding occupancy.



## STEP BY STEP

chandelier with its hundreds of crystal bulbs appeared to dwindle to a smoky gas-jet. The gorgeous Blue Room faded and shrank into a dingy cellar. Off came the President's stiff collar. The official smile melted away. He seemed to be sitting in the corner, comfortable and cross-kneed, on a three-legged stool, while Lucey, Phil Gleason and a few of the boys held forth. Now daughter Margaret runs across the street for a pail of steaming coffee. And while they sip it Calvin, quite content, drinks in knowledge of how elections are won in the wards. . . .

Two days later the same observer sat in the spacious President's Cabinet chamber where, needless to say, no session was in progress. "This man Coolidge," explained a close friend of the Chief Executive, "is a study in contrasts. To get at him at all you have to understand at least a few of them."

The observer did, and does, agree.



## CHAPTER V.

### GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE

IT goes without saying that personal matters such as marriage and home life are difficult to treat accurately during a president's lifetime. It being out of the question to publish private letters, community report must furnish the nearest approach to the real story, especially where letters are few. This is particularly the case with Calvin Coolidge. He seldom unburdened himself on paper. When he did so he intended the letters to remain private.

A man who has been at the President's elbow for the past four years, states that Coolidge was greatly distressed over the publicity given to his letter to James Lucey. (Perhaps this is so.)

A better example is the letter said<sup>1</sup> to have been written by Coolidge to his sick—and as it

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<sup>1</sup>In spite of search among friends, secretaries, and one close relative, the writer has no documentary proof; and he was persuaded not to put the question directly to the President.

## GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE

turned out, dying step-mother—during the Boston Police Strike, in which the Governor said that he was about to take a course of action which he knew was right but which would probably mean his elimination from public life. A letter of great political value, if allowed to leak out, since it would be conclusive answer to the charge that Coolidge, before taking a hand in the strike, waited to see which way public opinion would turn. No amount of effort has been able to unearth this letter.

Certain features of the Coolidge courtship are, however, moderately well established.

In the winter of 1904-5, Coolidge took rooms with one Bob Weir, now of San Francisco, who lived on Round Hill, about a mile and a half outside of the city of Northampton. Nearby the Clarke School for the Deaf is situated on the crest of a beautiful plateau, so that those whose ears are cheated, may feast their eyes on the winding Connecticut River, and, in the distance, Mount Holyoke and Mount Tom.

It is generally believed that Coolidge met the lady who was later to become his wife, through the medium of Mrs. Weir; but prior to the statutory introduction there is a significant preliminary mention by a lawyer who prefers to have his name withheld. According to this version, one morning, early in 1905, when the future President was shav-

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ing by the aid of a hand mirror propped in the window-sill, the personal farming stopped suddenly in mid furrow.

"Likely looking girl going up the street," he reported to Weir. "Guess I'll have to marry her."

Weir, though uneasy at the first sign of fever in this hitherto normal animal, merely asked, "What's her name?"

"Don't know her—yet," was the laconic answer.

Weir was at the time steward of the school where Miss Grace Anna Goodhue was one of the teachers. Weir was something of a character around town, and possessed all those traits which Coolidge lacked. He was genial, loquacious, light-hearted. He was always getting off some wag, as on the day when Judge Field accused him of loafing, he replied: "Why not? The boss is away." To him is also attributed the opinion that having taught the deaf to hear, Miss Goodhue's ambition was to make the mute speak. Hence the initial interest in Calvin.

Miss Goodhue was the daughter of the late Andrew I. Goodhue, who died in April, 1923, and Elmira Goodhue, the widow, who now lives in retirement at 21 Massasoit Street, Northampton. In the early days Andrew Goodhue was an excellent mechanic, and in Cleveland's administration was appointed steamboat inspector on Lake

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Champlain. He was also a church deacon. His daughter graduated from Burlington High School in 1897, and entered the University of Vermont in 1902, where Iva Gale was one of her chums. Here she took part in college theatricals, showing talent, it is said, in Shakespearian parts. She also sang in the glee club and was a member of Phi Beta Phi. Like her future husband, she had no particular plans at graduation, but Miss Caroline Yale, the efficient Principal of the Clarke School, was a family friend of the Goodhue's, a sort of an aunt to Grace; it was therefore decided that the young lady should come down to Northampton to assist in the lip-reading instruction.

Coolidge was thirty-two. Grace Goodhue was at least six years younger in age and sixty years younger in manner: vivacious, cheerful, friendly. In most features she was Calvin's antithesis. Her naturally gregarious, objective temperament was more than a balance for the latter's lonely introspection. At the Clarke School the older teachers spoke well of her. She was not, they say, a brilliant teacher, but more than satisfactory; her personal qualities stood out and people liked her. She was nice, wholesome and sympathetic, and "*she always made the best of things.*"

Affairs did not progress. Among some of the intellectuals on The Hill, the sentiment was not too strong for Coolidge. Coolidge's qualities

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were not of the show window variety. No drawing room ever tittered with excitement when the taciturn lawyer entered; waltzers never lingered on his arm; not even today in the boudoirs of Smith College girls, does his photograph vie with that of Rudolph Valentino's. And he kept such queer company: loved to talk with shopkeepers, street car conductors, shoemakers, blacksmiths and the like. Weir, through whose auspices Coolidge had arrived, was sort of chief housekeeper and quartermaster for the establishment. There were better prospects to choose from,—and some of Grace Goodhue's friends told her as much.

Things had reached the stage of trench warfare, —no movement on either side,—when Mr. Coolidge received advice that may have had decisive effect, at least so Lucey, the cobbler, says.

On the first evening that the writer spent down in the shadows of Gothic, he told this story:—

“One night Mister Cewledge was settin’ on that stool where you are.<sup>1</sup> His knees was crossed and he wasn’t saying nothing, as usual, awnly a little more so. Havin’ heard as to what was goin’ on and thinkin’ he was maybe a little bit dejected, I took the liberrty of asking: ‘How’s things going on The Hill, Mister Cewledge?’

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<sup>1</sup>The anecdote in practically the same form, was originally told to O. H. P. Garrett of the New York World, and was repeated to the writer by Lucey.

## GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE

"And he says, 'Not so good, Mister Lucey, not so good.'

" 'Mister Cewledge, I'm going to tell you something.' Says I. 'The next time you see the young lady, don't tell her all your law and your books and politics, and how you are going to get the School Board's Nomination. The next time you see her, just set and look at her shoes.'

" 'You must say, "What beautiful shoes you have on." Then look at her stockings. "What lovely stockings!" you say. And if a mite of her petticoat is showing, as no doubt it should, say, "What a becomin' dress!" And so on, and so forth, right up to her eyes. Then you say out loud: "What a lovely attractive lady you are!" And then, "What a lucky man it would be that married you." And after a while, "And how I'd like to be that lucky man!"'

"Well, Mister Cewledge didn't say much, but quite a spell later he came down to my little shop and sat there swinging his foot. Onc't or twice he smiled to himself, so I asked him:

" 'How's things going on The Hill?'

"And he says, 'Better, Mister Lucey, *very much* better.'

From the many post-mortem versions of the Coolidge courtship, it is difficult to sift the diamonds from the ore. One, however, said to be



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vouched for by the first lady of the land<sup>1</sup> is that when the zero hour arrived, Mr. Coolidge journeyed to Burlington, where Miss Goodhue was vacationing with her family.

"What are you doing here?" Asked the father-in-law to be.

"I have come to marry Grace."

"Does she know about it?"

"Not yet, but she will."

The couple were married in Burlington, October 4, 1905, by the Reverend E. A. Hungerford.

They took a short trip to Montreal,—not very far from Burlington, as a matter of fact. The vacation could not be prolonged, since Coolidge was running for the School Committee and must do some campaigning. They rented a little furnished house from a Smith College professor, but the next spring moved into the northern half of that now famous double house, No. 21 Massasoit Street, which has since been their home. The story of the rent is well known. When Mr. Coolidge was Governor, they still paid thirty-two a month to the owner, former Mayor O'Brien, a Democrat.

It is a cheerful, neat, nondescript house, neither New England, nor Western, nor yet Southern. Today there is fresh white paint and green shut-

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<sup>1</sup>Confirmed by both Washburn and Edward E. Whiting in "President Coolidge: A Contemporary Estimate."



## GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE

ters. And the smell of a New England dinner.<sup>1</sup> Between Hell Gate and the Golden Gate, Mobile and Maine, there are a million such. There is a tiled fireplace, and, sure enough, on the mantle over it in a small frame the old motto:

"A wise old owl lived in an oak,

The more he saw the less he spoke—" etc.

Hanging from the mantle also, a little pair of high leather boots, probably owned by Calvin as a child, and on the wall a framed parchment of resolutions presented when Coolidge became President of the Massachusetts Senate. That and the police strike were the turning points of his career.

For Mrs. Coolidge's life at first was not all horses and fours. The narrow road led to the top, and she resolutely took it. "There are two ways to be self-respecting;" says Mr. Coolidge in one of his speeches, "to spend less than you make, and to make more than you spend." The Coolidges chose the former. The widely advertised routine and Puritan simplicity of their life is no backward looking pose. If, for political purposes, the most has been made of the fact (together with the dollar-a-day bedroom at the Adams House in Bos-

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<sup>1</sup>Compare Professor McElroy's story in "The Life of Grover Cleveland:"—Cleveland as a White House bachelor sitting at table in lonely splendor. When the smell of cabbage comes from the annex he begs his factotum to swap his dinner with the servants.

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

ton, and the midnight oath at Plymouth) it was an unvarnished necessity at the time.

The mile and a half to Northampton was accomplished on foot or trolley. Not until the Vice-Presidential days did they own the cheapest sort of automobile. They used a party telephone. Some persons who called up No. 21 Massasoit Street to congratulate the Governor-Elect of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, found themselves talking to the Reverend Ambler Garrett, the kindly pastor of the First Methodist Church, who did not, however, relish disturbance in the depths of creating his Sunday sermon. The dollar room in Boston, where Mrs. Coolidge stayed with him some week ends, was extended to two rooms when, and not until, Coolidge became Governor. The first person to congratulate him on the gubernatorial nomination, found him sitting alone by a window opening on a shaft. When the news of the Vice Presidential nomination came trickling over the wires to the Adams House, do you know Mrs. Coolidge's reaction?

"Let me see," she is described as saying; "the Vice President doesn't have a house. That means more hotel life, I suppose."

It is of course on Mrs. Coolidge that these facts have a bearing. A friend of the Northampton couple said: "Mrs. Coolidge didn't have too good a time. She didn't care much for card parties,



*Courtesy Miss J. E. Willoughby*

Grace Goodhue as a school teacher



## GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE

for her husband didn't play. She danced occasionally and liked it. But Mr. Coolidge was hardly an enthusiast. Before they were married he used to come up here and sit—just listen to her talk.”

Mrs. Coolidge was fond of society, not spelled with a big “S,” but the give and take outside contact to break the monotony of four walls. What came her way, she took. In later Boston days, when the Governor was tucked in bed, she would sometimes slip out to a function, attended by a member of the Governor's staff.<sup>1</sup> He went, if he did, from a sense of duty, leaving when the requisites had been fulfilled. One Washington observer, at a dance where the Vice-President stood on duty at the head of the receiving line, caught the latter in the act of hiding a yawn behind his wife's fan. The observer tried to hide his own

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Edward E. Whiting tells the following story of the period when Coolidge was Governor and they occupied rooms 159-60 at the Adams House: Mrs. Coolidge had gone to some social gathering in the afternoon; she had left a note for the Governor, giving the telephone number by which she could be reached if necessary. At about 5 o'clock she was called to the telephone. The conversation was as follows:—

“Yes.”

“Is this Grace?”

“This is Cal. Hop home.”

Mrs. Coolidge hopped home. The extreme brevity of the message neither offended nor surprised her. She has always understood. She knew that she would not be summoned except for some particular and pressing reason. There was no necessity for details in the telephone conversation. She hurried to the hotel immediately and found that the cause of the summon was adequate.

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smile, but Coolidge saw it, and, so it seemed, returned a wink, as man to man.

If this gives the impression that the Coolidge family life was unhappy, the impression is wrong. In addition to being undisputed President of the Household, Mrs. Coolidge was early after marriage, busied with her own Administration. On September 7th, 1906, she was elected Governor of John Coolidge, and on April 13, 1908, re-elected to serve as well over Calvin Coolidge, Jr. The elder boy resembles the Goodhues, while Calvin, Jr. has the mouth and eyes of the Coolidges and the Moors. They are well brought up, sensible American boys, taught each to stand on his own two feet. They go to Mercersburg Academy, where the family wish is adhered to, that no preference or undue publicity be given.

There are certain truths that one can glean from community opinion, and the most certain of these is that "Grace Coolidge always made the best of things." Since without this trait of character it is obvious that her partner could never have reached the summit, there are among her friends none so small but wish Mrs. Coolidge every drop of comfort—if such exists—amid the duties and powers thrust upon the Nation's hostess.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MIND IN THE MAKING

IN JANUARY 1907, Mr. Coolidge made his first appearance in the Massachusetts State Legislature in Boston. His salary as representative was \$750.00 a year. His law business in his home town in Northampton was practically at a stand-still during the time the Legislature was in session. He took a dollar bedroom, without bath or running water, at the Adams House on Washington Street, listed as "Suite" Number 60, on the third floor, center of the building. It abuts on an inner courtyard about the size of an air shaft. A traveling man would take it as a last resort. The only light comes through a half-sized window which in turn is cut off by an interior chimney. The room is clean enough, but otherwise as cheerful as a cell. Here, sometimes stretched on an old-fashioned three-quarter wooden bed, used also as a reading lounge, the Northampton representative spent the majority of his evenings.



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Coolidge was placed on the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, which, as the name indicates, makes recommendations on proposed amendments to the State Constitution. It is considered a comparatively unimportant assignment, although, owing to the nature of the subject, the committee may become temporarily important. He was also assigned to Mercantile Affairs, a business committee having jurisdiction over more important subjects.

Among the House members on these Committees were Dr. Ezra W. Clark of Brockton, Elmer C. Potter of Worcester, later Prohibition Enforcement Officer, Prindle of Williamstown and McCann of Lynn. The names of Stevens of Middlesex, Cassidy of Berkshire, Prouty of Worcester and Hampden, appear among the Senate members of these Committees.

No little part of Coolidge's respect for the courts, which we shall mention in another connection, was obtained in 1908, when he served on the Judiciary Committee of the House, together with the present Judge Elias B. Bishop of Newton, William E. Dorman of Lynn, later counsel to the Senate, John E. Rousmaniere of Boston, and others. This Committee, generally speaking, dealt with the Superior and Supreme Courts and had jurisdiction over changes in court laws, court procedure, etc. Such questions, for example, as

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"Must the Attorney General of the Commonwealth be a Member of the Bar of the State wherein he serves?" and the famous "Peaceful Picketing Bill," were adjudicated during 1908. On the latter Coolidge voted "Yes." He also served in this year with the Committee on Banks and Banking. It is noteworthy that he never received a chairmanship in the House and that even membership on the Judiciary Committee, (for which by temperament he was peculiarly fitted) did not come his way until the second year.

It is characteristic that during Coolidge's early days on Beacon Hill he passed by practically unnoticed. He is described as making little impression upon his colleagues, one of whom remarked that on looking around the committee room Coolidge was the last man he would have singled out for future prominence. In his paraphernalia had been a letter of introduction addressed to the Speaker of the House, John N. Cole, from Richard W. Irwin of Northampton, taking the liberties that a friend can take, which said that "*like the singed cat, he's better than he looks.*" Picture a singed cat with damp and carefully parted hair, a young looking cat with a graven manner, a cat apparently asleep but always bringing in a bag of mice—and you have an idea of the self-sufficient representative from Northampton.

Even today, embellished by the dignity of office,

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one doesn't pick Coolidge as the outstanding figure in any group of prominent men such as are frequently photographed calling on the President. Pictures do not represent him. Action, speech, acquaintance, seem necessary to feel the simple dignity beneath that slight exterior.

Time and again you may watch this or that delegation file through the President's oval chamber in the Executive offices. They have come far to shake a "real" President's hand. There is no chance for an audience. They stand in long file, sorted out by Pat McKenna, guardian of the inner door, watched by Secret Service men, and given a final scrutiny by C. Bascom Slemph, who stands a pace or two paces on the Chief Executive's left. The Presidential Secretary is not a Greek statue, yet many persons make a step towards Mr. Slemph before discovering beside him the unobtrusive Yankee, smiling a perfunctory "'mawning."

So *that* was Coolidge!

There is a note of disappointment as they move away, unconsciously measuring themselves against the Republic's helmsman, or conjuring an image of public men that look the part, like a Harding or a Washington, a Robert Bacon or a Hughes. But the more discriminating observers are comforted by the suggestion in one of Coolidge's early speeches: "What we need in politics is more of the office desk and less of the show window."

# THE MIND IN THE MAKING

## II.

It is an axiom on Beacon Hill that nine times out of ten the workers on committee are the men from the western part of the state. They spend more time in the State Library, more time on the facts of the case, more time “'maousin' raound” the lobbies, as Calvin once put it to a fellow sufferer. Jones of Salem, Smith of Lynn, daily commuters to the Chamber, have their business, their family, and the 5:12 train to keep an eye on; whereas Brown from far-off Berkshire County finds no conflicting interests during the week. Not only did Coolidge make Boston his headquarters—as a rule he came down from Northampton on Sunday night, not returning to his family until Friday—but he was by nature of a single-track disposition. If he admired his colleagues' geniality he was unable to copy it. His heart was not a show window; he did not try to make it one. He never slapped a man on the back unless he was choking to death. He was not a “joiner.” He seemed to take the Masons' vote without the thirty-third Degree; he never climbed the Tall Cedars of Lebanon; an Elk meant no more to him than a beetle. Yet with the Babbitts, he fared well enough, and, what is more, they liked him.

Being the antithesis of theatrical, he disliked the usual run of theatre. As for being a good

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fellow, on a clambake or pre-Volsteadian carousal, it simply wasn't in his makeup. Yet he was not a teetotaler. Occasionally, with some friends before a function he took, and enjoyed, a single cocktail; whereupon his dry humor went truer to the mark.

The Adams House was at that time a rendezvous for politicians from the western part of the State, and Coolidge found himself gravitating toward the men worth while knowing. Upon those who held the key he impressed himself. Nor was this accident. A party man by nature and training, he made it a point to be near the power behind the machine. As in college he had gravitated toward leaders like Dwight Morrow and Herbert Pratt, when the class as a whole knew little of him, so in Boston he came to know that old party man, Winthrop Murray Crane (who had early been a member of the Republican National Committee, Governor of Massachusetts, and Senator for the unexpired term of George F. Hoar), and such men as William M. Butler, later National Committeeman and ardent backer in 1924.

Tom White was an early Coolidge fan, and White in those days knew local politics as well as Tumulty knew the ropes at Trenton. Representative Walter E. McLane of Fall River, whose acts as disbursing officer were at one time under investigation, was occasionally seen with Coolidge, and



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Robert M. Washburn, his colleague and biographer, who sat with him on the Railroads Committee, was one of those whose trenchant humor has been known, in the midst of a drowsy session, to evoke a sudden and nasal cackle from the otherwise taciturn Vermonter.

As time went on, he got along well enough with the Frothinghams, the Lodges and the Saltonstalls. But he had that quality which drew closer to him the rank and file—and one or two whose personal habits were below the rank and file. He was at home with them, but not of them.

If he was alone in the evening, supper in the central dining room at the table by the looking glass, third from the corner. He came to know Frank Hall, hospitable proprietor, who knows the ways of many men and strange. Sometimes he would drop into Hall's sitting-room office, with its hardwood paneling and comfortable chairs of the Black Oxen period.

"Got a minute, Frank Hall?"

"An hour for you, Governor. Try one of mine tonight."

With a cigar and a friend, the Coolidge shell came off. "Get him alone, interested in something, and he'll talk faster than I will," Hall used to say. "Didn't pay to disturb him, though, when he was up there thinking about things."

Coolidge did not wish to vote on a given sub-

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ject, to join in a majority or minority report,—it mattered not whether the subject were municipal finance, railways, agriculture, judiciary, banks and banking, military affairs, constitutional amendments, or the many other subjects which he slowly absorbed—until the reasons were thoroughly clear to himself. With his “Yea” and “Nay” he was parsimonious because he didn’t wish to change it. Once given, it was apt to be final. His mind was not quick like Roosevelt’s,<sup>1</sup> but its decisions were likely to be based on more factors than the decision of his contemporaries. He pried deep into the future. When one remembers that even the opinions of the mentally alert Roosevelt were the result of “a good deal of revolving on the subject,” as he said to Admiral Sims, one can see that Coolidge, to reach a correct conclusion, must revolve continuously.

One of his chief assets, or defects,—as you wish—was, therefore, a certain cautious judgment congenital and developed. This he invested as carefully as the small investor his last dollar. Mentally, as well as pecuniarily, he came pretty near to being close-fisted, to himself, it should be said, more than to others.

In 1907-1908, a state representative’s salary was \$750, the vote to raise it to \$1,000 having been rejected by the Senate in that year. From 1912 to 1915, when Coolidge was Senator, the salary was



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\$1,000. It was later voted to raise this to \$1,500 a year, but Coolidge, at that time Governor, vetoed the bill. It was, however, passed over his veto, an attitude which some observers considered not only in line with the Governor's economical tenets, but also astute politics. To the state it advertised that Coolidge's utterances for retrenchment, were to be backed by deed; furthermore, inasmuch as the raise was to be passed over his veto—as *Coolidge clearly foresaw*, it left no resentment among the Senators. On more than one occasion as Lieutenant-Governor, he refused special pay requests for chief clerks who had done overtime on special occasions; usually it was with some such remark as: "Maybe the Governor will change that, Mr. Jones."

The fact is, that he practiced frugality on himself. Neither for others nor for the State did he condone its opposite. His laying the ban on wasteful White House gifts, such as Thanksgiving turkeys, is a case in point.

Evidence of this tenacity of pocketbook and opinion is frequently seen in Coolidge's later actions. They are no more noticeable in his make-up, however, than the influence of Massachusetts institutions and the traditions of its State House. To understand Coolidge, these must be studied.

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## III.

Capitol Hill was originally called "Tra-Mount," owing to the three little hills rising from the crest on the northwest side of town. Here the colonists "kept watch to foresee the approach of forrein dangers." After the erection of the Look Out Beacon in 1635, it was called Beacon Hill. The corner-stone of the original Bulfinch Capitol was drawn to its place July 4, 1795, the procession lead by His Excellency, Samuel Adams, Governor, and fifteen white horses. In 1883, Lord Coleridge, Lord Chief Justice of England, after visiting the more important American capitols, including Washington, Boston and Albany, wrote: "Far the most beautiful city in America, as far as I have seen, is Boston, and the State House is the most beautiful building in the country."

In the halls of the State House, New England memories crowd each other for expression. There is much that is inspiring, perhaps a little that is stagnant. Busts and statues in every corridor ask, "What have you done?" You live again with Adams, Franklin, Webster, Shaw, Hancock, Endicott, and Revere. You read inscriptions by Lowell, Emerson and Longfellow. Not even the pureist pacifist can walk without a sense of up-lift, through the Hall of Flags,—for here there are

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locked behind glass wardrobes, every emblem and shred of emblem from the blue field banner of Bunker Hill, and the strips carried at Gettysburg, down to the colors and guidons of the Massachusetts regiments at Chateau Thierry and St. Mihiel.

Twelve Ionic columns, said to be among the world's finest, surmount the balcony above the Senate staircase. Through them one views mural paintings of the Boston Tea Party, the Argument Against the writs of Assistance, and Paul Revere's Ride. Amidst these influences, it is difficult to imagine a public servant plotting against the state. In such an atmosphere, forms are taken seriously. A message from the Senate to the House is never telephoned. The Sergeant-at-Arms lifts his golden mace and with much ceremony delivers the message to the proper authorities.

And then the good old codfish. It is difficult for an outsider to stir up proper reverence, even if the sacred fins were expensively painted and "constructed from the best grade of straight-grained pine." Yet we find that on March 7, 1895, it was ordered: "That the Sergeant-at-Arms be and is hereby directed to cause the immediate removal of the ancient representation . . . from its present position . . . and cause it to be suspended in a suitable place over the Speaker's chair in the new chamber." Whereupon, "A committee of fifteen, under the escort of one G. B. Adams,

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Sergeant-at-Arms, proceeded to the old chamber, where the emblem was lowered, *wrapped in an American flag*, and borne to the House of Representatives by four messengers."

That the more worth while of these customs have had an influence upon the President, there is reason to believe. His conception of the functions of the judiciary in their relation to legislative bodies, as we shall see in a later chapter, places more than usual emphasis on the inviolability of judiciary findings. His respect for the properties of office as distinguished from the man is well known. One who stood close to Coolidge outside the church at the close of the Harding funeral ceremonies, noticed that a well-known general and other dignitaries bowed to acquaintances right and left. The new President was scrupulous in observing the requisites of the occasion. His eye did not wander from the path. Massachusetts observed that as Lieutenant Governor, Coolidge was meticulous in deferring to the Governor in matters of etiquette, but as Governor his attitude changed forthwith. There must be no slighting of the office of Governor of the Commonwealth. Members of the National Women's Party who called at the White House shortly before Coolidge's first message to Congress, were struck by the dignity of the proceedings. Some of them expected that the unpretentious New Englander,

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of whose simplicity they had heard, would mingle informally with the gathering. Not so. The doors were thrown open by attendants on either side, who announced: "The Prresident—of—the United States."

An even more important feature of Calvin Coolidge's early years in the training ground of the Massachusetts Legislature, was that it gave that opportunity for study and reflection so necessary for his development. It was never possible for him to act by intuition, to succeed by mere personality, to advance by dramatic leaps.

### IV.

And so, as evening came along, Coolidge with his black brief case would come down from the State House on Beacon Hill, saunter across the broad Boston Common, through the back alley of Keith's Theatre, and sometimes by a side entrance direct to his room. Here, after supper, committee papers came out and he began the morrow's work. He read much. Here, as Professor Grosvenor used to say, he: "specialized in his own mind." Often he pondered the legislative problems and the political philosophy which in later years were to find profuse expression.

Coolidge's early speeches and state papers, in the opinion of many students, are the highest type

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of political literature of the past quarter of a century. Platitudes, some say. Perhaps so. But politics is a platitudinous business. The speeches are not a mere conglomeration of phrases. They no more sprang into being than does a monument. Piece by piece his opinions took shape,—scraps of beliefs formulated over a period of years. Let us leave him temporarily, to examine the first, and in many ways the most fundamental of these speeches. It was delivered when he was forty-two years old, before the Massachusetts Senate, upon election as its President, January 7, 1914, and though well-known, certain of its doctrines will bear repetition:—

“This Commonwealth is one. We are all members of one body. The welfare of the weakest and the welfare of the most powerful are inseparably bound together. Industry cannot flourish if labor languish. Transportation cannot prosper if manufactures decline. The general welfare cannot be provided for in any one act, but it is well to remember that the benefit of one is the benefit of all, and the neglect of one is the neglect of all. The suspension of one man’s dividends is the suspension of another man’s pay envelope.

“Men do not make laws. They do not discover them. Laws must be justified by something more than the will of the majority. They must rest



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on the eternal foundation of righteousness. That state is most fortunate in its form of government which has the aptest instruments for the discovery of laws. . . .

"Courts are established, not to determine the popularity of a cause, but to adjudicate and enforce rights. No litigant should be required to submit his case to the hazard and expense of a political campaign. No judge should be required to seek or receive political rewards. . . . The electorate and judiciary cannot combine. A hearing means a hearing. When the trial of causes goes outside the court-room, Anglo-Saxon constitutional government ends.

"The people cannot look to legislation generally for success. Industry, thrift, character, are not conferred by act or resolve. Government cannot relieve from toil. It can provide no substitute for the rewards of service. . . .

"Large profits mean large pay rolls. But profits must be the result of service performed. In no land are there so many and such large aggregations of wealth as here; in no land do they perform larger service; in no land will the work of a day bring so large a reward in material and spiritual welfare.

"Have faith in Massachusetts. In some unimportant detail some other States may surpass her, but in the general results, there is no place on



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earth where the people secure, in a larger measure, the blessings of organized government, and nowhere can those functions more properly be termed self-government.

“Do the day’s work. If it be to protect the rights of the weak, whoever objects, do it. If it be to help a powerful corporation better to serve the people, whatever the opposition, do that. Expect to be called a stand-patter, but don’t be a stand-patter. Expect to be called a demagogue, but don’t be a demagogue. Don’t hesitate to be as revolutionary as science. Don’t hesitate to be as reactionary as the multiplication table. Don’t expect to build up the weak by pulling down the strong. Don’t hurry to legislate. Give administration a chance to catch up with legislation. . . .

“Statutes must appeal to more than material welfare. Wages won’t satisfy, be they never so large, nor houses, nor lands; nor coupons, though they fall thick as the leaves of autumn. Man has a spiritual nature. Touch it, and it must respond as the magnet responds to the pole. To that, not to selfishness, let the laws of the Commonwealth appeal. Recognize the immortal worth and dignity of man. Let the laws of Massachusetts proclaim to her humblest citizen, performing the most menial task, the recognition of his manhood, the recognition that all men are peers, the humblest with the most exalted, the re-

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cognition that all work is glorified. Such is the path to equality before the law. Such is the foundation of liberty under the law. Such is the sublime revelation of man's relation to man—Democracy.”

While others hobnobbed on the highways, thus in the evenings did Coolidge ruminate, stretched under the gas jet, on his three-quarter bed, between the four dingy walls and the so-called window of cell No. 60, Adams House.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MAYOR—STATE SENATOR—LIEUTENANT- GOVERNOR<sup>1</sup>

COOLIDGE'S four committees as State Representative during 1907-8 had been Constitutional Amendments, Mercantile Affairs, Judiciary, Banks and Banking. The last named committee had before it the duty of revising the Commonwealth Banking laws, for which work, with intensive knowledge obtained as counsel for the Nonatuck Savings Bank, he was especially fitted. The roll call of the 1907-1908 sessions finds Coolidge on the side of so many progressive measures that Whiting raises the question whether he was not in those days a radical. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, Coolidge had been influential, by labor in the Committee Room and by speech on the floor, in putting on the Statute

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<sup>1</sup>The speeches in this Chapter, as well as those in the Appendix prior to the Vice-presidency, are used "by permission of and special arrangement with Houghton-Mifflin Co., authorized publishers."

books the famous anti-monopoly bill,<sup>1</sup> an action which could hardly be called reactionary. He also favored the direct primary system in the election of United States Senators; he voted for woman suffrage and woman labor laws; favored pensions for school teachers, lowered railroad fares for workingmen, increased playgrounds for children, surgical equipment in all factories; advocated the anti-injunction bill and the anti-discrimination bill.

As we shall see at a later period, the groups generally included in the term "Labor" considered him their friend, while Capital was no less confident that by him their interests would be conserved. For example—Coolidge's backers in the first Northampton Mayoralty campaign boasted that owing to his "more than usual business experience, his advice is continually sought by the business and banking interests of the city." Certainly this period marked the height of his crusading instinct. Thereafter his ardor for legislative reform gradually cooled into the conviction—often later expressed and showing the trend of his

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<sup>1</sup>The following appears in the "Springfield Republican" under date of March 28, 1908: "Representative Coolidge of Northampton is in charge of a bill reported from the Committee on Judiciary and Labor sitting jointly, whose purpose is to prevent contracts and combinations in restraint of trade. The bill declares all contracts, agreements, arrangements and combinations of monopolistic nature relating to articles and commodities of common use to be contrary to public policy, null and void, and to be preceeded against by the Attorney General."

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mind toward the executive point of view—that administration must have a chance to catch up with legislation.

After his apprenticeship in the Massachusetts Legislature Coolidge returned to Northampton. Throughout the year 1909 he was in private law practice, bringing to bear the knowledge and reputation gained on Capitol Hill, and, it is to be assumed, recouping to a certain degree a bank account depleted in the State's service. During his service in the Legislature, he had acquired, if nothing else, a reputation for keeping his feet on the ground and his shoulders near the desk. He avoided trouble and served his constituency as well as within him lay.

In 1910 he was elected Mayor of Northampton. It is noteworthy that the figures of these early elections foreshadowed those of later days. He was Mayor for two terms, 1910 and 1911. He was Lieutenant Governor for three terms, and Governor for two terms. All told there were seven elections, and *in each and every case he was returned to office by a greater plurality than in the original election.* He won the mayoralty by the scant margin of 187 votes; he was re-elected by a plurality of 256 votes. He was elected Lieutenant-Governor by the margin of 24,191; his second re-election was by plurality of 101,731. He was elected Governor of Massachusetts by a plurality

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of 17,035; his re-election for Governor after the great police strike was by the sweeping plurality of 125,101 votes. From these figures each will draw a characteristic conclusion. The cynical will state that Coolidge extorted with extraordinary skill the weight of the machine and the influence of patronage; the average man, that it was a case of achievement and character gradually—and in the case of a strike dramatically—making its impress on the electorate. In connection with President Coolidge's firm stand for Federal economy and tax reduction, it is interesting to note that Mayor Coolidge lowered city taxes and at the same time decreased the city debt by \$90,000. Campaign leaflets of the time also show that he raised the pay of school teachers and other city employees.

At the end of the second term as Mayor of Northampton, he received the Republican nomination for State Senator from the Berkshire—Hampshire—Hampden districts, which nomination at that time was tantamount to election. The greater part of the week now found him back in cell No. 60, Adams House. His salary had risen to the munificent proportions of \$1,000. It is to be observed that in the House he had received no chairmanship; Speaker Cole, in spite of the "singed-cat" letter of introduction, had taken little



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notice of its bearer until on a speaking tour he spent a night in Coolidge's Northampton home.

In the State Senate Coolidge gradually developed ability and acquaintance. He was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs, Chairman of the Railroad Commission, and also served on Cities and Municipal Finance. As Chairman of the Special Legislative Committee on Reconciliation, he sat in practically a judicial position on the merits of the Great Lawrence Strike. As Chairman of the important Railroad Commission, he acted in similar capacity with relation to the famous New York, New Haven and Hartford Railway "scandal" of that year, (with which will always be linked the name of Charles Sanger Mellen).

His record together with his friendship for the party leaders, his judicial temperament, his well-earned reputation for dependability, made him an admiral candidate for Senate President. That he had for a long time had the job in mind is a reasonable inference from the promptness with which he acted when an opening was made by the unexpected failure of Levi Greenwood to be re-elected in his own district.

The Senate Presidency, as remarked, was the first event that lifted Coolidge above the crowd, stamped him as a professional politician as dis-



tinct from those with whom politics is a passing adjunct to another career. If, however, it came as a surprise to his Northampton friends, it was because most of them, like Judge Field, didn't know what that "most inscrutable little devil" was up to.

Presidency of the Massachusetts Senate is the usual road to political preferment. If no serious mistakes are made and a reasonably strong character is evidenced, these are the channels through which one reached the Lieutenant-Governorship and, in due course, the Governorship. Coolidge presided efficiently, impartially, at times humorously. He was re-elected in the following year. So unusual and epigrammatic had been his first inaugural of the previous year ("Do the day's work . . . Give Administration a chance to catch up with Legislation") that expectation ran high. His speech of acceptance when elected for the second time as President of the Senate, delivered on Wednesday, January 6, 1915, is probably the shortest induction speech in history. Here it is:—

"Honorable Senators:

"My sincerest thanks I offer you. Conserve the firm foundations of our institutions. Do your work with the spirit of a soldier in the public service. Be loyal to the Commonwealth and to yourselves and be brief; above all things, be brief."

Officially, as we first said, Coolidge "kept on

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keeping out of trouble," and privately kept on being quaint. His acts, saying, way of doing things, were distinctly his own. Below is a document addressed to slow moving Senate committees. It is Coolidgesque because of the single word, "ALARM!" at the head.

Massachusetts Senate,  
President's Room,

March 30, 1914.

ALARM!

Dear Senator:—

There are 706 items on the Bulletin upon which hearings have been closed and reports have not been made, and there are 908 still unreported. I hope that you will undertake during this week to call and attend as many executive sessions as possible and report in everything that you can possibly decide.

I suggest that hearings begin at 10 o'clock in the morning and that you proceed to make reports whether a quorum of the committee is present or not. It will help if you will be on time at committee meetings.

CALVIN COOLIDGE,  
President.

Once at an upstate meeting in the autumn, he delighted a crowded house by the twist of a farmer's phrase. Rising to speak he opined that "the

frost is on the pumkin', but there's no fraost on this here meetin'." The following bit is recorded by Washburn:

"To his then House-Chairman of the Committee, with reference to an attitude he had taken on a bill before them, he wrote: 'Sand your tracks, you're slipping.' He was Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions at Worcester, at a Republican Convention, October 3, 1914, which nominated the Hon. Samuel W. McCall for Governor. At one of its hearings, when he was asked a pointed question, he twirled his chair towards the window and looked out in silence. Some one said to Governor McCall, who stood near by: 'I could take dictation from that man and in long hand.'"

Coolidge did not court the lime-light, nor, in the usual sense of the word, the voter. If being on the front pages of the news meant complications, or swerving from a course of action carefully planned, then the front pages could go hang. For examples we must look fore and aft along his career from this point. In 1912 he had, characteristically, taken no part in the Bull Moose movement, his sympathies being with the stable element of the party. During the League of Nations fight, he was equally characteristic in refusing to be drawn into the argument.

To a caller<sup>1</sup> of those days, asking for views about the League of Nations, he replied: "I am Governor of Massachusetts and Massachusetts has no foreign relations. If ever I should hold an

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Sullivan.

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office calling for action or opinion on this subject, I shall put my mind to it and try to arrive at the soundest conclusions within my capacity."

Perhaps the acme of caution which he ever reached, the culmination of the instinct for avoiding trouble, was the well-known retort to White House press correspondents after the first Cabinet meeting to which the Vice President had been invited. Pressed to tell what seat he had been assigned to, he answered: "You will have to get that from the President," certainly playing the loyal subordinate's part to the Queen's taste in view of the fact that pictures of the meeting showed exactly what seat he did occupy.

### II.

At about this time Frank Waterman Stearns comes into the picture. There he has ever since remained. Stearns built up R. H. Stearns and Company, a department store, established by his father in 1847. Outwardly speaking Stearns is a trustee of Amherst College; member of the Executive Committee of the American Trust Company; trustee of the Provident Institution of Saving, etc.; also trustee of several benevolent organizations, such as the Bunker Hill Boys' Club, the Boston Childrens' Hospital, the Civil League for Immigration and



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Frank Waterman Stearns, A Real Friend



the South End House, a well-known social settlement. Inwardly speaking he is an optimist and an idealist; that typical American combination, an iron-fisted, but big-hearted man of affairs. From the tone in which some Bostonian hostesses refer to "that man," it is assumed that his grandfather was born on the wrong side of Beacon Street. The son, Foster Waterman Stearns was an A. B., and A. M.; gave up the ministry to become State Librarian of Massachusetts and to receive a bullet at St. Mihiel.

To some persons it is difficult to explain Mr. Stearns, as the following conversation will reveal.

Recently, in the pullman car, outward bound from Washington, a man who was making a study of Coolidge, mentioned the name of Stearns. In the other corner the smoking car expert had overheard the conversation.

"Say!" bellowed the expert, "who the deuce is this man Stearns anyway?" He was not satisfied with the answer. Flicking a contemptuous cigar ash into the receptacle for saliva, he continued:

"What I want to know is what's he expect to make out of it?"

"Why—as an old friend and booster for Coolidge—he is helping Coolidge in the White House."

"Tell that to the Marines. I want to know



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what's his game—what's he think he's going to get?"

There have been various versions of the Stearns-Coolidge acquaintance. Mr. Stearns himself says that "some of the accounts have been exaggerated," meaning that it was not a case of love at first or even second sight. The "sewer" story is in essence correct. As an Amherst graduate, vintage of '78, Stearns came before the Massachusetts Legislature to lobby "some picayune bill" permitting the college to enlarge its sewer facilities. Coolidge, then State Senator, was Chairman of the Committee, and represented, among others, the Amherst district. Morton Berg<sup>1</sup> reports Stearns' reaction.

"'You can imagine then what I felt when that man (Coolidge) sat through our plea without saying a word, without moving a facial muscle. When we were through he not only failed to endorse our little bill, he failed to say that he was sorry that he could not explain why.

"'Do you wonder, then, that I spent nearly a year being angry at Coolidge?

"'It turned out later that the sewer extension bill had been presented too late in the year to be considered at that session. But no matter. I could never forgive him, I felt.

"'The surprise of my life came the next session.

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<sup>1</sup>Boston correspondent of the New York American.

Coolidge, who had become president of the Massachusetts Senate, made it his business at the earliest possible moment to put through our bill. He did it unsolicited. Moreover, he incorporated valuable amendments which had not occurred to us the year before.

“‘Of course this changed my attitude toward Calvin Coolidge. It interested me in the man. First, I sought his acquaintance, then his friendship.’”

The story is, in the main, interesting because typical of the Coolidge method of action, a method originally natural and developed because of its success. We saw it in action when Coolidge as a Northampton lawyer obtained the scholarship for Lucey's daughter Margaret. The method is to put the worst foot forward, discourage hope, promise nothing. The resultant action, if it does come, and especially if it is reported to the beneficiary through a roundabout source, is an unforgettable surprise.

Thus Coolidge welded to himself two such diverse characters as James Lucey and Frank Stearns.

Stearns watched, approved and gradually enthused. Not infrequently the strangely assorted pair were seen together; the expansive, kindly merchant listening for a word of wisdom from the lean and dry legislator. Occasionally Stearns

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would buttonhole men on the street corners to pour in their ear sweet praise of Calvin The Great. Occasionally he gave a small dinner with just the right people. He was overjoyed if his hero made a first impression, depressed when men failed to see gold beneath the uncompromising surface. He wrote letters to Massachusetts friends sending excerpts from Coolidge's speeches. He asked for and answered comment, thereby starting a free Coolidge Correspondence Course. He turned the Stearns' Advertising Agency, Ltd., into the Coolidge Propaganda Parlor, Unlimited. The speeches were gradually expanded into the volume "Have Faith in Massachusetts," of which volume Stearns was instrumental in circulating thousands upon thousands of copies. One is inclined to believe that this advertisement of Coolidge is comparable in importance with the famous Douglas debates in their importance to Lincoln.

Emphatically Stearns had faith before the event. He did not join the band wagon. He was the man behind the push cart. Long before Stearns had become intimate with the future Governor, he became convinced of his character, honesty, and of the fact that he was the type needed by the country for high executive position. Stearns has been called—the phrase is Edward G. Lowry's—"A disciple under the Whistlerian definition of a man who has the courage of his master's convic-

tions." He was a great deal more than that. He had the courage of his own convictions in his master's ability. The feeling by degrees crystallized into a belief too dignified to be called a "hunch," and too practical to be called a vision, that Coolidge was destined for Great Things.

Stearns now began grooming the Senator for Lieutenant-Governorship, in which his ultimate object was, of course, the Governorship. He gave a dinner at the Algonquin Club in Boston, to which three or four dozen men of standing were invited. After the dinner he began to urge Coolidge to announce his candidacy. From February to May Stearns and his friends continued to urge. But B'r'er Rabbit, he kept on sayin' nothin'. The Coolidge backers were nervous because that able opponent, Guy A. Ham, had long ago announced his candidacy and during tours impressed everyone with his personality and brilliance. Coolidge still refused to act.

A factor in Coolidge's delay was Grafton D. Cushing, the able and distinguished-looking Lieutenant-Governor. Cushing made what, in retrospect, looks like an unlucky decision to contest the Republican nomination for Governor against the Honorable Samuel W. McCall. Coolidge did not, until after Cushing's move, announce his candidacy for Lieutenant-Governorship. Thus Cushing left an opening into which Coolidge promptly

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stepped, in line with his method of progress wherever possible without contest. It was another important factor in which the Coolidge line of reasoning, as later revealed, was accurate, wise, far sighted. He knew that if, as President of the Senate, he announced his candidacy, every move, every decision, would be viewed in false light. "Between those who were for me and those who were against me in the Senate," Morton Berg reports it; "and between those in the Senate who would be candidates for my place as President of the Senate, the business of the Commonwealth would not be effectively done."

In this decision Coolidge was undoubtedly moved by consideration for the state welfare. His decision was also wise from the personal point of view.

Immediately after the close of the legislature, the situation changed. Coolidge and Stearns had dinner together. The talk was scant as befits friends. Toward the end of the meal the future President leaned on the table, and handed across a thin slip of paper on which was penciled the single sentence:

"I am a candidate for Lieutenant-Governor."

(signed) C. C.

## IV.

The Lieutenant-Governor in most states, and until recent years the Vice Presidency of the United States, have been considered comparatively ornamental posts. We all chortle at the ultimate chagrin of Theodore Roosevelt's enemies who thought to lull him into obscurity in its arms. Recent history records the scorn of Hiram Johnson for the Vice Presidential embrace, and the rumored epitaph for his tombstone: "Would now that I had wooed her."

In Massachusetts, however, the Lieutenant-Governorship is no sinecure, because in the usual course of events it leads to Governorship.

McCall was duly nominated for first place on the ticket over Grafton Cushing. The slate therefore became McCall and Coolidge. The latter campaigned for a ticket for his Chief. They won. Coolidge was elected Lieutenant-Governor over Guy A. Ham by a plurality of 24,191. It was a particularly important stepping stone in his career.

Loyalty, in deed, as well as in word, is one of the requisites of the second in command. Coolidge did more than fulfill the letter. He was loyal in implications. Nowhere, with the exception of the Vice Presidency, was his discipline of mind and purpose better evidenced. Probably no President since Cleveland, has been a firmer



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believer in the party system of Government. Yet Coolidge managed in various important situations, to represent to his audiences with an apparent and presumably real, lack of party bias, the problems which came before him. In many respects the Lieutenant-Governorship may be compared with the Vice Presidency minus the duty of presiding over the Senate. Removed from the routine of sitting as President of the State Senate, the new office gave Coolidge another oasis for reflection. He was naturally called upon to make a great many speeches: in them he was able to reach a larger audience than ever before, and in them whether or not one agrees with their conclusions, he evidenced soundness of thought and diction, not in the writers opinion, equaled by him in later and more important days. In due time his reputation as a political philosopher of firm but conservative thought, reached beyond the borders of Massachusetts.

Because in those days he did impress his personality to a certain extent, and his political creeds to a greater extent, upon selected and gradually growing New England audiences, it may be permitted at this point to examine the speeches and doctrines at some length. At that time there was considerable legislative enthusiasm to curb big business profits.



## MAYOR—SENATOR—LIEUT.-GOV.

Said Coolidge at the Amherst College Alumni Association in February, 1916:

"We live in an age which questions everything. The past generation was one of religious criticism. This is one of commercial criticism.

"We have seen the development of great industries. It has been represented that some of these have not been free from blame. In this development some men have seemed to prosper beyond the measure of their service, while others have appeared to be bound to toil beyond their strength for less than a decent livelihood.

"As a result of criticising these conditions there has grown up a too well-developed public opinion along two lines; one, that *the men engaged in great affairs are selfish and greedy and not to be trusted*, that business activity is not moral and the whole system is to be condemned; and the other, that employment, that work, is a curse to man, and *that working hours ought to be as short as possible or in some way abolished*. After criticism, our religious faith emerged clearer and stronger and freed from doubt. So will our business relations emerge, purified but justified. . . .

"I agree that the measure of success is not merchandise but character. But I do criticise those sentiments, held in all too respectable quarters, that our economic system is fundamentally wrong, that commerce is only selfishness, and that our citizens, holding the hope of all that America means, are living in industrial slavery. I appeal to Amherst men to reiterate and sustain the Amherst doctrine, that the man who builds a factory

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builds a temple, that the man who works there worships there, and to each is due, not scorn and blame, but reverence and praise."

Throughout the spring of 1916 the same problem, the comparative rights of capital and labor in their relation to legislative ardor, seems to have been occupying his mind. Before the Brockton Chamber of Commerce, he said in his preamble:

"Man's nature drives him ever onward. He is forever seeking development. At one time it may be by the chase, at another by warfare, and again by the quiet arts of peace and commerce, but something within is ever calling him on to 'replenish the earth and subdue it.'

"It may be of little importance to determine at any time just where we are, but it is of the utmost importance to determine whither we are going.<sup>1</sup> Set the course aright and ——— time must bring mankind to the ultimate goal.

"We are living in a commercial age. It is often designated as selfish and materialistic. We are told that everything has been commercialized. They say it has not been enough that this spirit should dominate the marts of trade, it has spread to every avenue of human endeavor, to our arts, our sciences and professions, our politics, our educational institutions and even into the pulpit; and because of this there are those who have gone so

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<sup>1</sup>Compare the first sentence of Lincoln's famous House-Divided-Against-Itself Speech: "If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it."

far in their criticism of commercialism as to advocate the destruction of all enterprise and the abolition of all property.

“ . . . Before we decide upon a wholesale condemnation of the most noteworthy spirit of modern times it would be well to examine carefully what that spirit has done to advance the welfare of mankind.”

That Coolidge naturally reached a sounder philosophy when not engaged in campaign speeches is evident from comparison of the following three excerpts. The first two were delivered before the election of 1916; the last is a non-partizan essay entitled: “On the Nature of Politics.” At Riverside in August he said in part:

“It may be that there would be votes for the Republican Party in the promise of low taxes and vanishing expenditures. I can see an opportunity for its candidates to pose as the apostles of retrenchment and reform. I am not one of those who believe votes are to be won by misrepresentations, skilful presentations of half truths, and plausible deductions from false premises. Good government cannot be found on the bargain-counter. We have seen samples of bargain-counter government in the past when low tax rates were secured by increasing the bonded debt for current expenses or refusing to keep our institutions up to the standard in repairs, extensions, equipment, and accommodations. I refuse, and the Republican Party refuses, to endorse that method of sham and shoddy economy. . . . The Democratic programme of

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cutting the State tax, by vetoing appropriations of the utmost urgency for improvements and maintenance costs of institutions and asylums of the unfortunates of the State, cannot be the example for a Republican administration."

The same thought, that is to say refusal to cut taxes by curtailing necessary institutions, is the basis of his remarks the following month at the home of the late Augustus P. Gardner. After a statistical review of overcrowded conditions in state institutions, he concludes:

"I feel the time has come when the people must assert themselves and show that they will tolerate no delay and no parsimony in the care of our unfortunates. Restore the fame of our State in the handling of these problems to its former lustre.

"I repeat that this is not partisan. I am not criticising individuals. I am denouncing a system. When you substitute patronage for patriotism, administration breaks down. *We need more of the Office Desk and less of the Show Window in politics.* Let men in office substitute the midnight oil for the limelight. Let Massachusetts return to the sound business methods which were exemplified in the past by such Democrats in the East as Governor Gaston and Governor Douglas, and by such Republicans in the West as Governor Robinson and Governor Crane.

"Above all, let us not, in our haste to prepare for war, forget to prepare for peace. The issue is with you. You can, by your votes, show what

system you stamp with the approval of enlightened Massachusetts Public Opinion."

The speech is to be observed not only for the Office-Desk-vs.-Show-Window epigram. For its denunciation of parsimony it is interesting in view of the oft-expressed opinion in connection with the Mellon tax plans, that Coolidge is congenitally cautious and thrifty of expenditures. In his early campaign it is apparent that he was on the other side of the fence.

Speeches are not as valuable as personal letters—not to be published during lifetime. Nevertheless in speeches at least sections of Coolidge are revealed. Therefore space is devoted to them. The paper "On the Nature of Politics," could have been written, it seems, only by a New Englander, only by an Amherst man familiar with the doctrines of Professor Garman and influenced as to style by a recent reading of his Emerson. Excrepts will suffice:

"Politics is not an end, but a means. It is not a product, but a process. It is the art of government. Like other values it has its counterfeits. So much emphasis has been put upon the false that the significance of the true has been obscured and politics has come to convey the meaning of crafty and cunning selfishness, instead of candid and sincere service. The Greek derivation shows the nobler purpose. Politikos means city-rearing, state-craft. And when we remember that city also



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meant civilization, the spurious presentment, mean and sordid, drops away and the real figure of the politician, dignified and honorable, a minister to civilization, author and finisher of government, is revealed in its true and dignified proportions.

“There is always something about genius that is indefinable, mysterious, perhaps to its possessor most of all. It has been the product of rude surroundings no less than the most cultured environment, want and neglect have sometimes nourished it, abundance and care have failed to produce it. Why some succeed in public life and others fail would be as difficult to tell as why some succeed or fail in other activities. Very few men in America have started out with any fixed idea of entering public life, fewer still would admit having such an idea. It was said of Chief Justice Waite, of the United States Supreme Court, being asked when a youth what he proposed to do when a man, he replied he had not yet decided whether to be President or Chief Justice. This may be in part due to a general profession of holding to the principle of Benjamin Franklin that office should neither be sought nor refused and in part to the American idea that the people choose their own officers so that public service is not optional. In other countries this is not so. For centuries some seats in the British Parliament were controlled and probably sold as were commissions in the army but that has never been the case here. A certain Congressman, however, on arriving at Washington was asked by an old friend how he happened to be elected. He replied that he was not elected,

but appointed. It is worth while noting that the boss who was then supposed to hold the power of appointment in that district has since been driven from power, but the Congressman, though he was defeated when his party was lately divided, has been re-elected. All of which suggests that the boss did appoint in the first instance, but was merely well enough informed to see what the people wanted before they had formulated their own opinions and desires. It was said of McKinley that he could tell what Congress would do on a certain measure before the men in Congress themselves knew what their decision was to be. Cannon has said of McKinley that his ear was so close to the ground that it was full of grasshoppers. But the fact remains that office brokerage is here held in reprehensive scorn and professional office-seeking in contempt. Every native-born American, however, is potentially a President, and it must always be remembered that the obligation to serve the State is forever binding upon all, although office is the gift of the people.

“. . . Here we soon see that office-holding is the incidental, but the standard of citizenship is the essential. Government does rest upon the opinions of men. Its results rest on their actions. This makes every man a politician whether he will or no. This lays the burden on us all. Men who have had the advantages of liberal culture ought to be the leaders in maintaining the standards of citizenship. Unless they can and do accomplish this result education is a failure. Greatly have they been taught, greatly must they teach. The power to think is the most practical thing in the



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world. It is not and cannot be cloistered from politics.

“ . . . There will come out of government exactly what is put into it. Society gets about what it deserves. It is the part of educated men to know and recognize these principles and influences and knowing them to inform and warn their fellow countrymen. Politics is the process of action in public affairs. It is personal, it is individual, and nothing more. Destiny is in you.”

It is often said that Coolidge's verbal paucity is due to shyness; that he is cold on the outside, warm on the inside; that his will is iron but his sympathies keen. Indeed, the chameleonesque scheme of make-up constitutes much of the man's charm.

“He is one of the simplest, yet most composite men I have ever known,” said Frank Stearns in one of his talks with a student of Coolidge. “People speak of Coolidge's likeness to Lincoln. When I read of Hamilton I think Coolidge knows even more about finance than the Great Alexander. From the mere point of view of knowledge, he is the best equipped President the United States has ever had. He is like McKinley in that he can often tell what Congress will do on a certain measure before the men in Congress themselves know. I was reading Benjamin Franklin last night and I thought to myself: ‘How much Coolidge resembles Franklin!’”

From Coolidge's speeches it is apparent that he has studied, and copied, his political ancestors.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### GOVERNOR

DURING Coolidge's day Massachusetts held annual elections. He was Lieutenant-Governor in 1916, 1917, 1918, and, as mentioned, his plurality increased with every election. Having been true to the party and loyal to his Chief, he was, according to the Massachusetts system, next in line for Governorship. He was nominated without opposition. He was elected without difficulty. His plurality over his Democratic opponent, Richard H. Long, was 17,035.

"At three o'clock on the afternoon<sup>1</sup> following his first election, when most successful candidates were easily congratulated in public places, he was found alone in that inside room at The Adams House, sitting by an open window. In these days, the typical candidate who has reconciled his mind to holding high public office continues to pursue

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<sup>1</sup>R. M. Washburn, "Calvin Coolidge; His First Biography."

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

the voter. . . . As against him the personality of Calvin Coolidge presents a marked, restful and delicious contrast."

To the people Coolidge is generally known for his part in the Boston Police Strike. The issue was dramatic; it was advertised to the country at large; it emphasized certain traits which Coolidge undoubtedly possesses, but probably emphasized them with undue proportion to his other characteristics.

That he has straight from the shoulder courage if hounded to a corner, none but the shallowest critics will deny. There came to the front during his Governorship other issues of some importance by themselves and of great importance in revealing Coolidge. These must be treated before the strike gains our attention. There was, for example, the entire reorganization of the State executive system and the administrative functions of the Commonwealth. Of the Police Strike the President has had little to say in retrospect until one day when the subject was brought up by a visiting friend in the White House. The President remarked:

"They say the police strike required executive courage; reorganizing one hundred and eighteen departments into eighteen required a good deal more."

The statement is plain: He accomplished dur-

## GOVERNOR

ing governorship at least one project of which he is proud. The inference is also plain: His part in the police strike did not require so much moral courage as generally supposed.

"He is the type of man," says a letter from a distinguished Massachusetts legislator, "who could have drawn up the Constitution of the United States." The truth of the remark becomes more and more apparent as one studies Coolidge's speeches, doctrines and State papers. As time went on he had developed, together with his respect for the executive branch of the government, an increasing respect for the judiciary. A stone bridge between Springfield and West Springfield had been built at an expense well in the millions. The Supreme Judicial Court appointed a Board of Commissioners to apportion the expense between neighboring cities and towns. The findings were confirmed by the Supreme Judicial Court. An organized effort of legislators was successful in passing a Bill for an "equitable" redistribution of the expense. The Governor vetoed the bill, his message, Dec. 22, 1920, being in part as follows:

"The bill which is now before me provides, in substance, that 31 per cent of the cost of the bridge shall be paid by the county of Hampden, 55 per cent by the city of Springfield, 13 per cent by the town of West Springfield, and 1 per cent by the town of Agawam.

"The practical effect of the bill, if enacted into law, would

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be to relieve the town of Westfield of the 2 per cent and the city of Holyoke of the 3 per cent of the cost assessed upon them, respectively, by the report of the commissioners confirmed by the court, and to impose an additional 1 per cent upon the town of West Springfield and an additional 4 per cent upon the city of Springfield, leaving unchanged the percentages assessed upon the county of Hampden and the town of Agawam.

"The Supreme Judicial Court has said, in an opinion of the justices rendered to the Honorable Senate when the bill was before that body for consideration:—

"The final decree of the Supreme Judicial Court, affirming the report of the commissioners, was a judgment of a court. . . . The Legislature cannot "supercede" a judgment of a court by its direct declaration to that effect. (234 Mass. 612.)'

"Any authority of the Legislature to disregard the findings of the commission must rest upon the power in the legislative branch of the government to establish a division of the burdens of taxation different from that reached by appointees of a court in the exercise of a delegated quasi-judicial power.

"The only justification for the exercise of this power in the present case, after the General Court\* has provided in the act of 1915 that the decree of the court confirming the decision of the commissioners shall be final and binding, must be some reason of grave consequence. *The decisions of our courts must not be held in light regard, either by the General Court or by the people.* Respect for judicial decisions is essential to the maintenance of law. The very fact that the General Court, in the exercise of the sovereign power of taxation, may disregard an apportionment of special benefits in the present case, which has had the sanction of the highest court, is the strongest reason for restraint in the exercise of this power."

An even more important veto, because of the message it brought forth and because it showed

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\*This is Massachusetts term for the Senate and House of Representatives.

## GOVERNOR

where as a State executive Coolidge stood on the prohibition question, was that relating to the beer, cider and light wine bill of May, 1920. There are at least two groups of people who should read this message: Those who doubt where Coolidge stands on the 18th amendment and those who think—or thought prior to the President's first message to the Congress of the United States—that he was a wobbly politician, of uncertain opinions. With exception of the last paragraph (in which there is a slightly redundant peroration) the message is given in full:

“Executive Department, Boston, May 6, 1920.

*“To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.*

“In accordance with the authority conferred by the Constitution of the Commonwealth a bill “To regulate the manufacture and sale of beer, cider and light wines,” which is House, No. 38, is herewith returned without approval.

There is little satisfaction in attempting to deceive ourselves. There is grave danger in attempting to deceive the people. If this act were placed on the statute books of this Commonwealth today it would provide no beer for the people. No one would dare act upon it, or if any one did he would certainly be charged with crime. Similar laws in other States are to date ineffective. I am opposed to the practice of a legislative deception. It is better to proceed with candor. Wait until the Supreme Court of the United States talks.

“The proper authorities have declared the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution adopted. Under it Congress has passed legislation. Should the claim that the amendment is void be sustained, our present high license law remains in effect, and this act then will be a dead letter. No one would defend it. Should the act of Congress be declared



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void, then let Congress pass a new law. No one can say this act does not now or will not in the future conflict with United States law. It does not even pretend to be an act to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment. By the solemn adoption of an amendment to the fundamental law of the land jurisdiction over this subject has been placed in Congress. It ought to be left there until it is declared with equal solemnity by the Supreme Court that such amendment is void.

"When I took office I gave an oath to support the Constitution of the United States. That Constitution and the laws of Congress are declared to be the supreme law of the land. It may be that the Eighteenth Amendment and the act under it are one or both void. So far as any court has decided I understand the amendment has been sustained. They have been before the Supreme Court for some time, where up to now they both stand as law. That which the court hesitates to decide I shall not hasten to declare. It would be extremely improper to undertake to influence that decision by the action of the law-making power of Massachusetts. Do not anticipate it, await it. My oath was not to take a chance on the Constitution. It was to support it. When the proponents of this measure do not intend to jeopardize their safety by acting under it, why should I jeopardize my oath by approving it?

"We have had too much legislating by clamor, by tumult, by pressure. Representative government ceases when outside influence of any kind is substituted for the judgment of the representative. This does not mean that the opinion of constituents is to be ignored. It is to be weighed most carefully, for the representative must represent, but his oath provides that it must be "faithfully and impartially according to the best of his abilities and understanding, agreeably to the rules and regulations of the Constitution and laws." Opinions and instructions do not outmatch the Constitution. Against it they are void. It is an insult to any Massachusetts constituency to suggest that they were so intended. Instructions are not given unless given constitutionally. Instructions are



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not carried out unless carried out constitutionally. There can be no constitutional instruction to do an unconstitutional act."

Many political students agree with the President's statement that department re-organization required more skill and courage than any other single act of his governorship. This act was the result of a state constitutional amendment which allowed for the abolishment of the more than one hundred wards and commissions, and their re-organization into not more than twenty departments. The reduction was to be effected within, and not more than, three years. Coolidge's achievement presents three outstanding features. The first is that it was accomplished at all. The second is that it was accomplished within one year, and during the first session of the legislation or General Court in which it was possible. But the most remarkable feature is that it stirred up so little rancor on the part of those whom it affected adversely or on the part of political adherents whom such persons might enlist on their behalf. During the post war era this was one of the first moves of any state in the Union to reduce the government to a business organization basis. From a business point of view it was a tremendous achievement.

As result of the reorganization Coolidge had, of course, some new appointments to make. He had infinitely more to unmake. The administrative

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departments were practically wiped out and re-constituted. Numbers of men had to be thrown out of jobs. Some were excellent men. At every turn some old codger was affected by the new law, some fellow who had been drawing government pay since Paul Revere's ride.

Racial and religious groups felt they had not been given proper presentation. Other office holders were reduced in rank. There was bound to be hard feeling. The remarkable part is that there was so little. The Governor announced.<sup>1</sup>

"If any present office holder is discovered to be working against the purpose of this amendment, which it is the executive intention to carry out, he will forthwith be removed from his present office insofar as such removal is within my power." Rather straight talk.

By those who did not understand Coolidge tactics, it was believed that the Governor would gradually fill the vacancies here and there, consulting various groups, considerations and interests. He did nothing of the sort. No rumors were allowed to get under way. No trial balloons were sent out. No persons were flattered by the usual procedure of allowing them to understand they were under consideration. With apparently little consultation he filled the entire list at one fell

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<sup>1</sup>Verbal statement to writer by Frank W. Stearns.

## GOVERNOR

swoop. This, by the way, was the precise method he had so successfully employed in appointing judges of the District courts, the Superior courts and the State Supreme Court. The advantage of such a method now appears. There were no honorable mentions. If, on the one hand no possibilities received flattering attention, there were correspondingly less disappointments. It was in line with Coolidge's dislike for making promises. "We-al—maybbe. Guess not," was his usual reaction to requests, or that phrase so familiar to his office mates: "We-al, . . . see what I can do 'baout it." Then noiselessly, to the surprise of the disappointed applicant, he did it.

In the reorganization of the one hundred and eighteen departments, so sweeping and drastic were the Governor's changes of personnel that it was impossible to cry "politics," or raise the breath of scandal which would naturally be in attendance had the matter been allowed to drag out and had each new appointment been discussed back and forth.

Coolidge's method was like a clean surgeon's cut. The constitutional convention had provided that an expensive cancer should be removed; Dr. Coolidge performed the operation speedily and without fear. Down went the knife. One scream and all was over.

There was, however, one scorching outburst

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from a prominent partisan officeholder who had been ousted and to whose insult was added injury by the offer of a \$1,000 per annum job. Edward E. Whiting, the only professional observer who places sufficient emphasis on Coolidge's reorganization coup, says there is no authority for stating that Coolidge deliberately courted this intemperate outburst, for the sake of a reaction, but that "If he did (so) it was a move of the utmost political cleverness." At all events the denunciation was so violent and insulting that thereafter other criticisms were weak, if not impossible. The opposition, so to speak, took the wind out of its own sails.

The episode again raises the question of Coolidge tactics. That he was honest in the larger sense of the word; that his primary purpose was, and is, to serve the state and nation to the utmost of his ability; that he was not the type who could be induced to use a public office for private gain, nor to shirk the duties of a present office for his own political preferment, must, by this time, be clear to the unbiased reader. In the first chapter we mentioned Ralph W. Hemenway, Coolidge's Northampton law partner, who is reported to have remarked, on the day following the 1920 Presidential nomination, that with "Cal's luck I'd hate to be in Harding's shoes." Since Coolidge's presid-



*Courtesy C. E. Blanchard*

Colonel John Calvin Coolidge, of Plymouth, Vt., father of the President, and Calvin Coolidge, Jr., youngest son of the President.







*Courtesy C. E. Blanchard*

The Porch at Plymouth



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ency Mr. Hemenway has made public the following statement:

"I had never seen Calvin Coolidge until he sent for me and made the proposition to take up the work of his office as his partner. I have been his partner now for five years. He could, no doubt, have made me rich by reason of his influence and his position, but I can truthfully say that in those five years Mr. Coolidge has not turned me over a dollar's worth of business through political influence or pull. He is not that kind of a man. It is not his idea of the proprieties of a public official."

The incident illustrates how little Coolidge allows personal friendship to influence his conduct of a public trust. It also illustrates how little Coolidge allows friendship to influence him in making an appointment. Fitness for the place, or fitness to serve the State, or to serve the purpose which Coolidge has in mind, is the only test. No recent Chief Executive of the United States has been less influenced by personalities. Campbell Bascom Slemph as Secretary to the President is a case in point. Whatever is said for or against Slemph's record, it was not an appointment for old time's sake. Coolidge knew Slemph could bring, and by all accounts has brought, to the office the precise factors needed in the situation. The men, however, have certain traits in common. Both are students. Neither have outdoor hobbies. Slemph's physique was never robust. When in the Virginia Military Institute, from which he was

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graduated in 1891, he was too frail for athletics. A classmate informs us that Slemph gave all his outside time to study, stood at the top of his classes and received in Latin 99.9, the highest mark ever given. Later the Presidential Secretary studied law at the University of Virginia and returned to be Professor of Mathematics at the Virginia Military Institute. He was never "well off" in spite of his investments in the Slemph Coal Company. He inherited his seat in Congress from his father. Since that time his career is known.

Lincoln brought to the White House as his secretaries, Nicolay and Hay, who had served him in Illinois. Mr. Wilson carried along Tumulty of Trenton days. Mr. Harding brought George Christian from Marion. Mr. Harding was divided between his growing conception of duty to the nation and his feeling that "Bill was a good fellow and should get something." Some of his least fortunate cabinet appointments were due to the earlier conception. Not so Coolidge. He is little influenced by the question, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?"

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

IN THE history of American industrialism the Boston police strike is significant because it marked the high tide of collective abandonment of duty by certain branches of the public service. In Coolidge's history the strike is crucial because admittedly the event which flashed his name into national prominence. Whether, but for the police strike, he would have reached the Presidency at another time is idle speculation, since numerous other personalities and hypothetical factors must be taken into consideration. Coolidge *is* President. We are concerned only with the causative event.

There has come to this writer's possession the minute-by-minute affidavit of the Intelligence Department covering the evening and night of that memorable September 9, 1919. He has also the entire correspondence which passed between Governor Coolidge, the late Edwin U. Curtis, at that time Police Commissioner of Boston, and the then

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Mayor, Andrew J. Peters. It may be permitted to review this threadbare question at length, if for no other purpose than to analyze those letters, together with the report of Henry Follansbee Long, later Tax Commissioner of the Commonwealth. Mr. Long, it is true, was Governor Coolidge's secretary, and this manuscript is perhaps in the nature of a campaign report; but the facts of this document have been admitted by members of the neutral Citizens' Committee such as its Chairman, James J. Storrow.<sup>1</sup> With the controversy and the ringing proclamations issued by the "Law and Order" Governor, the country is familiar. But the country does not know what was going on behind the scenes.

It may also be permitted to present, first, conclusions; second, detailed evidence from which the conclusions are drawn. Fair treatment is of necessity evidential. One of the earlier biographers in the course of a lengthy eulogy of Cool-

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"44, State Street,  
BOSTON

1S - Y

HENRY F. LONG, Esq.,  
Secretary to the Governor,  
State House, Boston, Massachusetts.

July 1, 1920.

My dear Mr. Long:

"I have read your draft on the history of the Boston Police Strike, which you have sent me today. It seems to me an admirable statement, a fair statement and an accurate statement.

I return herewith your manuscript.

Very truly yours,

/s/ JAMES J. STORROW."

## THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

idge, carefully avoids mentioning the name of Mayor Peters—about as convincing as the analysis of a football game in which only one team is mentioned. Few events have been subject to more acrimonious discussion and few events are less capable of partisan solution. Peters played an active and efficient part throughout.

But if, after studying all the documents and personalities we pronounce that Mayor Peters deserves entire credit for breaking the back of the strike, we are wrong. If we say that Commissioner Curtis was the sole strike breaker, we are also wrong; if we give to President Coolidge all the praise, we are equally wrong. The fact is, that Public Opinion, acting through press and Mayor and Governor—Public Opinion aroused as sharply and unanimously as few local events in American history have aroused it—broke the back of the strike well within the forty-eight hours between 5:30 P. M. Tuesday night, September 9, 1919, when the policemen walked out, and the Thursday evening of September 11.

Coolidge's primary contribution was to focus the sentiment first of the state, then of the nation, on the issues involved, and, with the crystallization of public opinion, to press them in a never-to-be-forgotten way. He had thought out in advance those very phrases by which in proper time he galvanized the electorate.



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A second conclusion with which those who have studied Coolidge's mental habits will agree, is that before, during, and after the strike, he behaved altogether as we should expect of him. We have by this time learned, as Frank W. Stearns learned long ago, that throughout Coolidge's career, patience of investigation, seeming indecision while studying the winds, but speed of action when his mind was made up, are fundamental traits. Just as we found first the State Legislator, then the State Senator, pondering in his room the political philosophy to which, when the proper time came,<sup>1</sup> he was to give sudden and clear expression, so in the great test of 1919 he kept both phrase and militia on the leash until its use was necessary beyond shadow of a doubt.

It is not to be denied that others would have stepped in more promptly. It is not to be denied that Coolidge moved along behind the interference, as was his constitutional right. It is true that B'r'er Rabbit stayed outside the brier patch while the lesser animals got tangled up. But when the right time came, B'r'er Rabbit said something mighty cute. And all the other animals clapped

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<sup>1</sup>Later Note: Coolidge's silence (construed by his opponents as vacuum) from the moment of his accession to the Presidency to his opening address to Congress, is a case in point. There is authority for the belief that as inheritor of the Harding mantle, he did not consider it fitting to state his own views until the opening of Congress. From that conviction, no amount of clamor was able to dissuade him.

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their hands and said, "That's just what I've been thinking."

## II.

It is essential to understand the peculiar provisions of the Boston charter. The Police Department is under direction of a Commissioner appointed by the Governor (not the Mayor) with the advice and consent of the Governor's Council. His term is five years, and he may be removed only for cause and only by consent of the Governor's Council. He may make and prescribe rules for efficiency and discipline, and punish as provided therein for their violation. He may not, however, increase the force nor its pay without authority from the Mayor. The city is also required to furnish accommodations for the Police. In short, although removable by, and partly responsible to the Governor, he is subject to city control in other features. Curtis had been appointed by former Governor Samuel W. McCall.

The Acts of 1885 provide that in certain contingencies the Mayor may take control of the police, and according to the Acts of 1917 "in case of tumult, riot or mob" the Mayor may call out such part of the State Guard as is within the City of Boston; and according to the Acts of 1883 the Mayor may in certain contingencies take over control of the Police Department. When the situa-

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tion is beyond the control of the Mayor, he may call upon the Governor for the remaining State Militia.

It must be emphasized that the sole issue involved—and the issue never changed notwithstanding much public discussion of other issues not involved—was whether the police force as a body should be allowed to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor. In 1918, Stephen O'Meara, the previous Commissioner, had condemned the project, nevertheless in the spring of 1919 rumors of such unionizing reappeared.

Meantime there had been a good deal of grumbling as to wages, living quarters, hours of reporting, etc. The justice of these complaints Police Commissioner Curtis admitted and had done all in his power to remedy, but for the consummation of remedies, time and other factors were necessary. The law requires that "The City of Boston shall provide all such accommodations;" also that legislation for the Police Department be initiated by the Mayor and City Council, subject to the approval of the Commissioner.

On July 29, 1919, Commissioner Curtis repeated Mr. O'Meara's order and added:

"I desire to say to the members of the force that I am firmly of the opinion that a police officer cannot consistently belong to a union

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and perform his sworn duty. I am not an opponent of labor unions, and neither was Mr. O'Meara. He pointed out in well-chosen language that there is no question in the police department as to how much of an employer's profits should be shared with the workers. Policemen are public officers. They have taken an oath of office. That oath requires them to carry out the law with strict impartiality, no matter what their personal feeling may be."

In the face of the above, followed by General Order 110, issued August 11, a union was organized in secret session and affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

On August 26 and 29 the Commissioner placed on trial nineteen leaders for violation of his promulgated ruling. Their defense was largely the need for better conditions and higher pay; but they *did not surrender* affiliation with the A. F. of L. Before Curtis' decision was handed down, Mayor Peters had appointed an impartial and non-partizan "Citizens' Committee of 34," headed by the prominent Boston banker, James J. Storrow. In so doing Peters stated, "The issue between the Commissioner and the men is clearcut. It is the question of whether the policemen have a right to form a union and become affiliated with the A.

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F. of L.” The report of this committee, as not generally appreciated outside of Massachusetts, was a compromise. It permitted the police to maintain their own local union, but not to affiliate with the A. F. of L. It also urged no discrimination against any member of the Boston Police Union because of previous affiliation with the A. F. of L.—in other words, a verdict of not guilty upon the men already on trial. Had it been accepted, the strike presumably would have been averted.

Mayor Peters could do nothing but approve the compromise. Police Commissioner Curtis, stoutly backed by Coolidge, refused to consider it. On September 6, Peters wrote to Curtis, “The report commends itself to me as a wise method of dealing with the subject. . . . *If* acceptable to you and the men, it affords a speedy and, it seems to me, satisfactory settlement of the whole question.”

On September 8, Commissioner Curtis wrote to Mayor Peters (the letters, sent by messenger, were for the most part in confirmation of telephone conversations): “The Commissioner has given to it (the report) that careful consideration which the occasion demands. It will be obvious to your Honor that the Commissioner cannot consider this communication as having relation to the present duty of the Commissioner to act upon the complaints now pending before him.”

# THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

On the same day, the day before the strike, Mayor Peters again urged this compromise on Coolidge by letter, stating, "I have been and I am still trying to get in touch with you on the telephone this afternoon as I should like to go over the matter personally." The Governor had been in Northampton for Sunday and was at the time addressing an "important" meeting in the western part of the state. He returned to Boston by automobile Monday evening. The Police Commissioner had by this time handed down his decisions suspending the nineteen ring-leaders. Coolidge backed the Commissioner's decision both to suspend the violators, and to refuse the Citizens' Committee compromise. The letter below, taken in its entirety, is significant. It is particularly significant in view of the belief in some quarters that Coolidge hung back, took a middle ground, compromised with labor. On the contrary, it was his refusal of intervention when a vital principle was at stake which hastened the strike.

September 9, 1919.

"Hon. Andrew J. Peters,

Mayor's Office, City Hall, Boston.

My dear Mr. Mayor:

"Replying to your favor and to the suggestions laid before me by yourself and certain members of your committee, it seems to me that there has arisen a confusion which would be cleared up if each person undertakes to perform the duties imposed upon him by law.



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"It seems plain that the duty of issuing orders and enforcing their observance lies with the Commissioner of Police and with that no one has any authority to interfere. We must all support the Commissioner in the execution of the laws.

"Regarding the matter of improvements in the condition of employment in the Police Department of Boston, the law requires that they be initiated by the Mayor and City Council, subject to the approval of the Commissioner. If wages, hours or station-houses ought to be improved, such improvements can be initiated by the Mayor and the City Council without any consideration of the making and observance of rules, because over that the Mayor and City Council have no jurisdiction. If justice requires improvements in conditions of employment, I believe such improvements, or such parts thereof as can be, should be made forthwith, accompanied by a statement that such additional improvements will be made at the earliest possible time and without reference to any other existing conditions in the Police Department.

"There is no authority in the office of Governor for interference in the making of orders by the Police Commissioner or in the action of the Mayor and the City Council. The foregoing suggestion is therefore made, as you will understand, in response to a request for suggestions on my part. I am unable to discover any action that I can take.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) CALVIN COOLIDGE."

If there is doubt as to the meaning behind the above letter, it is removed by a single statement reported in the Boston Globe of September 13, a week previous:

"Just before he left the State House, the Governor said that it was perfectly apparent that the Boston policemen ought to have increases of pay and betterment of conditions, but he still



## THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

clung to the belief that they had no right to go about getting them by joining the American Federation of Labor."

An interesting, but uncorroborated, glimpse is given into the Governor's mind at this period before the walk-out. The Governor's Chamber at the State House is rather more impressive than the President's private office in Washington. Bear in mind that the Governor felt it his duty to let the strike come if it must, rather than avoid it under certain conditions. Yet he is overheard to have asked a visitor, "Is there a right to strike against the public safety at any time?" Wherein is seen the germ of the idea later put into ringing form.

The last sentence of the disputed September 9 letter, "I am unable to discover any action that I can take," has been lifted from the context, misconstrued, by some writers into the meaning that Coolidge was afraid to meet the situation. Precisely the opposite is the case. Before the strike order he refused, through his Commissioner, to compromise with the principle that public servants responsible for the safety of the city could divide allegiance with an outside federation. In this, as we have seen, every one, including Peters and the Citizens' Committee, agreed; but Commissioner Curtis and Coolidge went further. They said any compromise by the rest of the force—that is to say, a promise to unionize locally, if at all—could have no reference to the men already on

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trial. To this conviction Coolidge clung, strike or no strike. And the strike came.

### III.

A little after 5:00 P. M., Tuesday, September 9, 1919, 1,117 patrolmen out of 1,544 walked out. The strike was accomplished as follows, according to the minute by minute record of the Intelligence Department:

"5:11 P.M.—A. Di Rago reported that at Station 16 practically 90 per cent. of the men had quit their posts who came in on this shift.

"5:25 P.M.—C. C. Stanchfield reported that practically 90 per cent. of the men of Station 2 were walking out with apparel on their arms, and appeared to be quitting the Station for good.

"5:27 P.M.—T. Curry reported that the men were walking out with clothes, and without badges and helmets, at Station 4. Practically the total force of this shift had quit.

"5:35 P.M.—A. Di Rago reported that Station 1 was practically empty except for officers."

The Governor and his staff, with the Adjutant General and Lt. Col. Robert O. Dalton, Chief of Intelligence, moved to the Adams House<sup>1</sup> where

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<sup>1</sup>Of course, the Governor lived in the Adams House, anyway. Peters was also kept informed of the situation during the night. (See Appendix. B)

## THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

they established headquarters for the night, Mr. Long says, "in order to be ready to respond in full measure to any call for assistance that might be made upon him during that night by the Mayor or the Police Commissioner." Rioting did not, as generally believed, break out immediately; and it is to be emphasized that only in case of *actual* or threatened tumult, riot or mob can troops be called either by the Governor or the Police Commissioner. The Secret Service findings continue:

"In general the walk-out had been orderly," so far as the Intelligence Bureau could find "and except for cheering by the crowd in some instances, no particular action on the part of the people at large."

Not until 11:00 P.M. did the rioting start, according to the Intelligence report, which also reveals the testimony on the disputed fact as to whether on that night the Governor attempted to aid. Through his secretary the Governor attempted to reach the Police Commissioner and other authorities.

"11:10 P.M.—R. O. Dalton reported all quiet on Tremont Street and the Common, except for a crap game going on on the Mall, opposite the Park Street Church.

"11:15 P.M.—T. Curry reported by telephone from South Boston that car on which he was traveling was held up, stoned by a mob and the people

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driven from the car, it being the second car so held up. Mr. Long instructed Colonel Dalton to telephone police headquarters and the same was attempted twice. The line was busy, so was unable to make connections.

"11:25 P.M.—J. A. Hasselbrook reported from Scollay Square that a crowd was gathering, ugly, and looking like trouble.

"11:27 P.M.—P. L. Smith reported that the crowd was uneasy, but no trouble toward Dover Street in Boston.

"11:30 P.M.—A. DiRago reported that the glass in the window of a clothing store on Washington Street, facing Friend Street was broken and the goods removed from the window.

"11:45 P.M.—J. A. Hasselbrook reported from Scollay Square that a mob was in control of the square, and was moving up Tremont Street. R. O. Dalton and P. L. Smith went down Tremont Street and on the Mall toward Scollay Square. Except for the crap game, which was still going on and somewhat increased in size, there were no outward appearances of trouble. P. L. Smith returned to the Adams House. R. O. Dalton proceeded on down towards Scollay Square. The mob, being driven by the Metropolitan Park Police, came up Tremont Street. The Metropolitan Police attempted to break up the crap game. The players moved down the Mall in the direction

## THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

of Boylston Street, and stopped opposite the head of Temple Place. After a few minutes' hesitation, the mob went across Tremont Street and smashed the windows of the Studio Jewelry Company on Tremont Street. R. O. Dalton reported back to Secretary Long at the Adams House with the request for instructions. J. A. Hasselbrook in the meantime telephoned in that conditions were bad in Scollay Square. T. Curry again telephoned that conditions were getting worse in South Boston. Special informant, name not ascertained, reported trouble at Dover Street. About this time it was reported that marines and sailors were on their way from the Charlestown Navy Yard to assist the Metropolitan Police. Conditions of rioting remained practically the same. R. O. Dalton and J. A. Hasselbrook were on the street and reported from time to time. Practically the last report of damage came from Avery Street where the crowd finished the job started earlier in the evening on Posner's about 2:45 A. M. Noise and general disorder, but not much violence prevailed until sunrise."

The above statement was sworn to by:

Lieutenant-Colonel Robert O. Dalton  
Thomas Curry  
John A. Hasselbrook  
Perley L. Smith

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The night of September 9, therefore, passed without the summoning of troops, either local or state. In the morning a sight not beautiful met the eye. Lawlessness continued, license ran wild. Crap games on historic streets were common, daylight robbery, the volunteer police were assaulted. Indication of the intense feeling between those in command is now given; for the formal correspondence is relieved by a dash of humor. Poor Curtis, who had stood the brunt of the attack, says to the Mayor on the morning of the 10th, "I am of the opinion that tumult, riot or mob is threatened" and that "Your Honor may act under Chapter 327 of the Statutes," etc.

The Mayor had, as speedily as possible Wednesday morning, issued a proclamation assuming control of the police; precepted "such part of the State Guard as is within the city of Boston;" and in addition requested the Governor to order "not less than three regiments of infantry to report at places specified not later than 5 P.M."<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that Peters acted with all possible speed: for up to the moment of the walkout he had relied on Police Commissioner Curtis' statement that he (Curtis) could well handle the situation.

Simultaneously Coolidge had sent word to Peters: "In accordance with the understanding

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<sup>1</sup>The hour was set by the Adjutant General, not by Peters, who wanted quicker action.



## THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

between the Police Commissioner and yourself he has transmitted to me a copy of his request to you for additional forces to maintain law and order. I am awaiting any request you desire to make, and the Adjutant General is prepared to execute such request forthwith."

The Governor, approached according to Hoyle, did not wait until 5 o'clock. He ordered the A. G. O. to mobilize three regiments forthwith. This was Wednesday, the 10th of September, the morning of greatest rioting.

### IV.

After the strike broke there can be no doubt but that Mayor Peters did, as he should have done and as was in his province, act first, and with the utmost promptness. His call for the militia on Wednesday morning was hastily dispatched and shortly followed by his precept taking charge of the police force.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately thereafter Coolidge took the reins from Peters' hands.

Because the Governor's famous proclamation saying that he had called out the entire State Guard was not dated until the next day, Septem-

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<sup>1</sup>At 2 A.M. Peters' phoned his Secretary, E. V. B. Parke, to have officers of the State Militia in the Mayor's office the first thing in the morning with all orders ready to execute. (See Appendix B)



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ber 11, and because on September 11 he also took over the Police Department, his enemies maintain that he rode in waving his banner after the field had been cleared. The anti-Coolidge pendulum swung highest in the post mortem attack of the New York "Nation." The attack was based primarily on the report of the Citizens' Committee, which says, "By Thursday morning order had generally been restored in the city. On Thursday afternoon, September 11, the Governor assumed control of the situation as indicated by his proclamation of that day."

According to "The Nation's" interpretation, "The Governor, who up to that moment had been unwilling to assist in preventing the strike, who had not had troops in the streets to prevent lawlessness after the police walked out, who had left it to the Mayor to call out the National Guard in Boston to protect the city, now took his first public action." Also, "Governor Coolidge sat discreetly on the fence until he saw on which side public sentiment was gathering. When this had manifested itself distinctly against the police, and after Boston's danger had been averted, Governor Coolidge climbed down from the fence on the side with the crowd and issued a bombastic proclamation needlessly mobilizing the entire State Guard."

In an editorial on the opposite page of this publication which "is not actuated by hostility toward

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Mr. Coolidge," appears the following restrained comment: "And now the Presidency sinks low, indeed. We doubt if ever before it has fallen into the hands of a man so cold, so narrow, so reactionary, so uninspiring, and so unenlightened, or one who has done less to earn it, than Calvin Coolidge. A child of marvelous fortune, he becomes the thirtieth President of the United States because of a newspaper fiction which falsely presented him to the country as a great and vigorous personality who in a dark and troubled hour had saved Boston from a strike *misrepresented*<sup>1</sup> as a wanton blow at law and order by some of its duly constituted authorities."

It is to be supposed that neither Mayor Peters nor Governor Coolidge saw any question for controversy. The discussion was inaugurated by their respective friends. The Citizens' Committee report was issued nearly a month after the strike. Its publication is said to have been "withheld at the wish of those interested in the Governor's campaign. This action was entirely in the interests of Mr. Coolidge."<sup>2</sup> However, the same Citizens' Committee report from which the Nation chooses its three "brief, illuminating, and for Mr. Coolidge, annihilating sentences," remarks in conclus-

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<sup>1</sup>The italics are ours.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to author from an official who does not wish his name drawn into the controversy.

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ion: "In justice to the Governor it should be stated that at all times he assured the members of our Committee that whenever called upon for a military force he would procure sufficient men,—if they could be secured,—to maintain law and order, and in further justice to all parties, it should be stated that the Governor, the Mayor and the Commissioner, in the opinion of the Committee, acted at all times from the highest of motives and with but a single thought, namely, the welfare of the Commonwealth and its people.

Respectfully submitted,  
George E. Brock,  
John R. Macomber  
P. A. O'Connell  
James J. Phelan  
A. C. Ratschesky  
Frederic S. Snyder  
B. Preston Clark, Secretary  
James J. Storrow, Chairman  
Executive Committee."

For the other side of the shield—and the version first accepted throughout the country—one must again turn to Commissioner Long. He continues: "It became more and more evident that the criminal element of the city was getting beyond the control of the local authorities. A general strike of firemen, telephone operators and other unions

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was threatened. During the middle of the second day, September 11, conditions were in such a state of disorder that the Governor saw he must take charge of the situation, and he was advised by the Attorney General that he could now legally exercise his authority, and restore law and order in the city of Boston. Governor Coolidge acted instantly."

Here is the famous Coolidge Proclamation of September 11:

"The entire State Guard of Massachusetts has been called out. Under the Constitution the Governor is the Commander-in-Chief thereof by an authority of which he could not if he chose divest himself. That command I must and will exercise. Under the law I hereby call on all the police of Boston who have loyally and in a never-to-be-forgotten way remained on duty to aid me in the performance of my duty of the restoration and maintenance of order in the city of Boston, and each of such officers is required to act in obedience to such orders as I may hereafter issue or cause to be issued.

"I call on every citizen to aid me in the maintenance of law and order."

Simultaneously, on September 11, the Governor took charge of the Police Department with the following order:

"You are hereby directed, for the purpose of as-

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sisting me in the performance of my duty, pursuant to the proclamation issued by me this day, to proceed in the performance of your duties as Police Commissioner of the city of Boston under my command and in obedience to such orders as I shall issue from time to time, and obey only such orders as I may so issue or transmit."

Behind the scenes there took place an important proof that the strike was not yet broken; for while the Governor was preparing, but before he had issued his proclamation, he was interrupted, according to his Secretary, by eighteen men and women leaders of labor unions, representing 80,000 of the key industries. Their plea was impassioned, threatening. He was given choice of reinstating the 1,117 policemen, or a general strike calculated to tie up water and surface transportation, telephones and business activities throughout Greater Boston. He repeated his support of the Police Commissioner and "stood silent until the labor spokesmen had gone out." It is now, of course, known that the greater strike did not materialize.

According to Secretary Long, immediately after the delegation departed, the Governor directed telegrams to Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, and Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, asking them to prepare to send forces into Massachusetts if the situation passed from his control.

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On the other hand, the writer is informed from another source that "The Governor wrote to the Navy Department on September 11, about two hours before issuing his proclamation, and declined the offer of troops, saying that order was restored. . . . I do not think Mr. Coolidge has ever made any statement about the Police Strike. There have been made, however, in Mr. Coolidge's behalf, many extravagant statements as to his activities in the Police Strike, some of which have been obviously unfair to Mayor Peters."

Although the writer has been unable to obtain the actual letters and telegrams referred to, they are not necessarily diametric. It would seem probable that Coolidge prepared the basis for Federal assistance, in case it should become necessary, at the same time stating that order had been (sufficiently) restored by local authorities to render Federal troops unnecessary.

### V.

Upon the third phase of the strike—who pressed the victory to its conclusion; who refused, under pressure and threat, to reinstate the striking policemen, who clearly and simply stated the issues involved; who concentrated public approval upon the precise truths which everyone vaguely realized<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For an excellent elaboration of this idea see Edward E. Whiting's "President Coolidge: A Contemporary Estimate."



## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

but wanted to hear emphatically blazoned from the house-tops—there can be no argument. It was Coolidge and Coolidge alone. Coolidge's answer to his own question was now flashed from sea to sea. His ultimatum to Gompers, "*There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time*" will perhaps be remembered with the great phrases of American history.

No sooner had the strike proper been broken than moves for reinstatement were instituted by and on behalf of the striking policemen. The Governor, in line with his statement to the eighteen leaders, instructed the Police Commissioner to fill the places of the 1,117, having been advised by the Attorney General that "the situation amply warrants a finding by you . . . that the police in question have abandoned their offices." The labor fight was then taken up by Samuel Gompers, who requested by telegram that action on the 1,117 be held in abeyance until after President Wilson's conference on October 6th. At this conference "All matters pertaining to relations between workers and employers were to be treated." Coolidge's answer will be recalled:

"Under the law the suggestions contained in your telegram are not within the authority of the Governor of Massachusetts but only of the Commissioner of Police of the city of Boston. With

## THE BOSTON POLICE STRIKE

the maintenance of discipline in his department I have no authority to interfere. He has decided that the men have abandoned their sworn duty and has accordingly declared their places vacant. I shall support the Commissioner in the execution of his order."

In answer Gompers sent a telegram, the substance of which is contained in the following sentences:

"The question at issue is not one of law and order, but the assumption of an autocratic and unwarranted position by the Commissioner of Police, who is not responsible to the people of Boston, but who is appointed by you. Whatever disorder has occurred is due to his order in which the right of the policemen to organize has been denied, a right which has heretofore never been questioned. My appeal to you as Governor and to Honorable Andrew J. Peters, Mayor of Boston, was not to sustain lawlessness, but to honorably adjust a mutually unsatisfactory situation in accordance with a suggestion by the President of the United States in a similar case. Nothing but good can result from favorable action upon my suggestion."

Coolidge, as will be remembered, cut to the heart of the question in his now famous answer, to which there was (and could be) no reply:

"Replying to your telegram, I have already re-

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fused to remove the Police Commissioner of Boston. I did not appoint him. He can assume no position which the Courts would uphold except what the people have by the authority of their law vested in him. He speaks only with their voice. *The right of the police of Boston to affiliate has always been questioned, never granted, is now prohibited. The suggestion of President Wilson to Washington does not apply to Boston. There the police have remained on duty.* Here the Policemen's Union left their duty, an action which President Wilson characterized as a crime against civilization. Your assertion that the Commissioner was wrong cannot justify the wrong of leaving the city unguarded. That furnished the opportunity; the criminal element furnished the action. *There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time.* You ask that the public safety again be placed in the hands of these same policemen while they continue in disobedience to the laws of Massachusetts and in their refusal to obey the orders of the Police Department. Nineteen men have been tried and removed Others having abandoned their duty, their places have, under the law, been declared vacant in the opinion of the Attorney General. I can suggest no authority outside the Courts to take further action. I wish to join and assist in taking a broad view of every situation. A grave responsibility rests on

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all of us. You can depend on me to support you in every legal action and sound policy. I am equally determined to defend the sovereignty of Massachusetts and to maintain the authority and jurisdiction over her public officers where it has been placed by the Constitution and Laws of her people."

### VI

#### RECAPITULATION

In the period leading up to the strike, Police Commissioner Curtis, took a firmer position than Mayor Peters and the Citizens' Committee. In this attitude Curtis was backed by Coolidge. The foremost praise for endeavor to prevent the strike should go to Peters. Both parties agreed that the police should not affiliate with the American Federation of Labor. Peters and the Citizens' Committee, rather than permit a strike, would pardon seventeen offenders already on trial. Curtis and Coolidge, rather than swerve from a threatened principle, would face a strike. And the strike came. Until this moment public opinion was divided.

For failure to quell disorder promptly—if there was such failure—divided authority and the peculiar provisions of the Boston charter are responsible. But it must be remembered that there was

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no appreciable rioting until eleven p. m., September 9th, 1919. Thereupon and thereafter all parties concerned acted with all speed permitted by statutory technicalities. We who judge do so from the point of view of spectators after the event.

Before the storm broke, Governor Coolidge played a cautious and thoroughly characteristic part. When the breaking storm made his course clear, he acted with equally characteristic firmness. By Coolidge supporters, many extravagant statements have been made obviously unfair to Mayor Peters. All parties concerned acted with regard to the public welfare.

The strike settlement established that whether or not collective abandonment of work is justified in some industries, neither the weapon nor its threat will be tolerated when used by the police.

In firmly handling and breaking the threatened after-strike, in teaching the lesson to labor, and above all in riveting national attention on the basic principles involved—principles with which statesmen have dilly-dallied for the past fifteen years—President Coolidge and President Coolidge alone, as America knows, lead the way.

## CHAPTER X.

### FROM SEA TO SEA

THERE IS a commonly reported story—and there is some authority for it—that while Coolidge was preparing to press home his strike proclamations but before the “after”-strike had been broken, the spokesman of a deputation of influential men said to him:

“Governor Coolidge, if you issue that proclamation you will defeat and probably destroy the Republican party in Massachusetts. You will certainly make it impossible for yourself to hold another public office.”

The Governor answered quietly: “It is not necessary for me to hold another office,” and went about his business. To certain fearful friends who said during the next fortnight that he would lose beyond recall the backing of labor organizations, Coolidge replied: “It does not matter whether I am re-elected.”

In the November 1919 elections, the issue,



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framed by Governor Coolidge's adversary, Richard H. Long, was the police strike and Coolidge's part in it. Coolidge won by the tidal majority of 125,101, the largest vote he had ever received in his career. Several industrial communities were listed in his column. The city of New Bedford, for example, which had given him 700 majority in the preceding election gave him over 5,000 majority in 1919. "The Western Massachusetts Labor Review" at a later time boomed him for the Presidency. He struck at labor groups and they took it standing.

It has been seen that by the Governor's enemies the Boston police strike was called another gorgeous piece of luck, following which Coolidge capitalized the praise and dramatized himself into the Vice Presidency. By Coolidge's friends it is maintained that the strike did not make him, it merely revealed him. Precisely when it began to dawn on people that the silent man on Beacon Hill was of presidential mould it is difficult to state. There were factors against him. The strongest was geographical. No Massachusetts man has been President since John Quincy Adams. In his favor were acuteness, courage, knowledge of government and governmental processes, humor, uncommon common sense and Americanism of the type toward which the country swung following the World War and Wilson. He was a new and

## FROM SEA TO SEA

interesting type of coin. He had developed few personal enemies. That he would have swung in the direction of sane Anglo-Saxon principles without giving way to the personal vitriolics exhibited by Lodge in this platform speech at the Chicago Convention, is so probable as to be put in the certain column. During the League of Nations fight, whatever his personal opinions may have been, we saw that he had refused to become officially involved. Concentration, self-discipline had made of his mind a series of watertight compartments. "I am Governor of Massachusetts and Massachusetts has no foreign relations." The great League fight, so far as Massachusetts was concerned, culminated in a mammoth debate at Symphony Hall between President Lowell of Harvard University, who, generally speaking, was pro-League and Senator Lodge who was—not. Coolidge presided with dignity, introduced both speakers with appropriate eulogy and thereafter issued a 500 word statement "relative to the Lodge-Lowell League of Nations discussion"—clarifying the position taken by each speaker but apprising no one of his own position.

To a large extent Coolidge had now become the embodiment of principles to which those turned who were confused by the World War and the issues left in its wake. He had been a war Lieutenant-Governor. No state had a finer war

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record than Massachusetts. In men and measures no state had given more promptly and freely. No state had found its hands less tied by alien cross-currents whose surge was so important in the Middle West. Yet after the war Coolidge was among the first to see the necessity of putting the house in order. As Governor he gave preference in public appointment wherever possible to World War veterans; signed a bill providing a \$100 State bonus for each and every veteran (yeowomen excepted); exempted veterans in the service from a poll tax; signed an act establishing a Soldiers and Sailors Employment Commission; created a new voluntary State Militia; established a Commission to care for the graves of American dead in foreign soil, et cetera.

But it was the police uprising which painted the Coolidge portrait across the canvass. "Those most sensitive to national psychology," as Whiting well puts it, "were beginning to wonder how law and order could be restored to that position which they had normally occupied," when the reply to Gompers and the proclamation of September 24th crystallized those very feelings struggling for expression by the sounder portion of the country.

Coolidge was not only acclaimed by the state and congratulated by President Wilson, but passed successfully through the crisis of praise. He acted

## FROM SEA TO SEA

with as much native sense as Robert Burns at Edinburgh. He kept his head and followed his own counsel. He did the day's work.

This was the time when the Coolidge book of speeches "Have Faith in Massachusetts" was published and widely circulated. Stearns is personally believed to have bought and distributed several thousand of copies. A handful of the clever minded pronounced them platitudes. The majority decided that Coolidge's actions equaled his promises; that his mind equaled his actions, and that both were far superior to his figure. The bottom of the bottle was found good. The Advertising Department on the fifth floor of R. H. Stearns and Company became the Coolidge Advertising Bureau. The \$32 a month home in Northampton became for sightseers an embryo shrine, for journalists the basis of local color stories. The sayings of Coolidge became front page "stuff." His name was flashed from sea to sea.

Such diverse personalities as Winthrop Murray Crane, William M. Butler, Thomas White, General John H. Sherburne, John N. Cole and others, became variously associated with the Coolidge boom.

The Governor kept on sawing wood. However sensible to the honor he may have been he gave no outward indication. He assumed it to be his duty

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

to pay strict attention to the business of governing the Commonwealth. Upon the urgent request of his backers for a word as to his position, and when it became no longer possible to ignore the fight for delegates made in his behalf, the Governor issued the following statement:

"The times require of men charged with public responsibility a singleness of purpose. The curse of the present is the almost universal grasping for power in high places and in low, to the exclusion of the discharge of obligations. It is always well for men to walk humbly.

"The great office of Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has twice been conferred upon me. There is no higher honor in the gift of her people. There is only one higher honor in the gift of the people of the nation. For that office my name has been proposed by men whose judgment entitles their decisions to a great respect, and their proposal has not been unsupported by a most respectable public approval. For all this I am deeply appreciative, with an appreciation which words alone cannot express. There must be acts to correspond.

"I have never said I will become a candidate for President. I have never accepted, unless by silence, efforts made by statesmen of more than national reputation to present my name to the Con-



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#### At The Threshold

Here is an untouched snapshot of the President as he often looks; serious and tired. It shows the deep lines in the face; the peculiar droop at the corners of the quizzical mouth; and the long, shrewd nose. It was taken at the north entrance to the White House.





## FROM SEA TO SEA

vention. I have made it plain I could not seek this office.

"Some weeks ago it was represented to me that certain forces in Massachusetts desired to support me. No contest for delegates has ever been contemplated. I have no purpose to enter such a contest. The probable outcome of a contest needs not to be considered at all. It is enough to know that some Massachusetts people intend to make one. The question is whether I ought to permit a contest in my name for delegates in my own State.

"I have taken no position in which I need to withdraw. I do not wish to embarrass anyone. I have a great desire to walk humbly and discharge my obligations. My paramount obligation is not to expose the great office of Governor, but to guard and protect it. The people are entitled to know that their office is to be administered not for my benefit, but for their benefit, and that I am not placing myself in any position where any other object could be inferred. There must be no imputation, however unfounded, that I permit their office to be used anywhere for manipulated purposes. I cannot consent to have their office taken into any contest for delegates in my own State. I have not been and I am not a candidate for President.

"I do not pretend to be insensible to the high honor that the mention of my name has brought

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me. The support of the people has touched me. For all this I am not lacking in gratitude.

“But the great fact remains that it is a time to counsel not with desire, but with duty. My duty, clear, plain, unequivocal, is to the people of Massachusetts. To Massachusetts, unafraid, orderly, patriotic, American, in the discharge of every duty an example to the nation.”

Through and through the statement is so Coolidgesque, so in line with his theories of office—consistently put into practice throughout his career—that every word of it rings true. In speech and action he had shown his belief that office should call for the man, not the man for the office; that the best way to obtain results was to be fit for them; and that until, and not until, you had delivered the goods was any amount of tactical shrewdness worth the effort. In the habit of leaving no stone unturned, in shrewdness in little things and acute preception in big issues, it is probable that Coolidge has been surpassed by no President of the United States. The fact does not alter his fundamental honesty. No discussion of his tactics, therefore, seems permissible without defining the word “shrewd” or setting forth under what circumstances and toward what results shrewdness is permissible. In short is a man any the less honest who gives a consistently honest administration at the same time realizing that honesty is the best policy?

# FROM SEA TO SEA

## II

In spite of this unencouraging statement the Coolidge campaigners continued to campaign. Their greatest obstacle was, of course, General Leonard Wood. Everyone recalls that Wood, with the Roosevelt mantle on his shoulders, an envious record behind him, the supposed backing of World War veterans, and the prevalent feeling that he had been shamefully treated by the Wilson administration<sup>1</sup>, was acclaimed as the candidate most likely to carry the convention on the

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<sup>1</sup>Two days after Mr. Wilson's death the following astonishing letter was published by the Springfield Republican. It was dated June 5, 1918.

"To the Editor of the Republican:

"I hope you will not be surprised to know that I subscribed almost in its entirety to the inclosed editorial from the Republican.

"I am keenly aware of and keenly sensitive to the implications which would be drawn out of the fact that I am not sending Gen. Wood to the other side, and I want personal friends like yourself upon whose approval I depend for my encouragement to know why I am not sending him.

"In the first place, I am not sending him because Gen. Pershing has said that he does not want him, and in the second place, Gen. Pershing's disinclination to have Gen. Wood sent over is only too well founded. Wherever Gen. Wood goes there is controversy and conflict of judgment. On this side of the water we can take care of things of that sort, because the fighting is not being done here, but it would be fatal to let it go on at or anywhere near the front.

"I have had a great deal of experience with Gen. Wood. He is a man of unusual ability, but apparently absolutely unable to submit his judgment to those who are superior to him in command. I am sorry that his great ability cannot be made use of in France, but, at the same time, I am glad to say that it is being made very much use of in the training of soldiers on this side of the water, a task for which he is eminently well fitted and which he is performing with diligence and success. With sincere regards,

"Faithfully yours,

"(Signed) WOODROW WILSON."

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first ballot. The Wood feeling was particularly strong in New England. In Massachusetts the delegation was split between Coolidge and Wood; a half dozen delegates from Massachusetts were pledged for the General, but in view of Coolidge's attitude no delegates could be pledged for him.

For years it had been a political belief that a favorite son must at least present a solid delegation from his own state. Coolidge at no time got the entire Massachusetts vote. His candidacy was built on the same hopes that Harry M. Daugherty so accurately forecast for Warren Harding—the hope of a deadlock between the leaders. At the time and in retrospect it appears that Coolidge was as available a dark horse as Harding and more popular with the general run of delegates. Some friends claimed that but for the Wood movement in his own state Coolidge might have been nominated for the Presidency in 1920.<sup>1</sup> The more apparent the Wood-Lowden-Johnson deadlock became the more often Coolidge's name was mentioned. A delegate from Nome, Alaska, voted for him after reading the book of speeches. Delegates from many states were ready to join a Coolidge swing if necessary. But the Coolidge workers at Chicago faced disturbing factors. One of

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<sup>1</sup>This seems doubtful in view of the comparatively small number of electoral votes from Massachusetts compared with those from other pivotal states.

## FROM SEA TO SEA

them was the question raised by would-be converts from other states. "If your man is so fine why doesn't the solid Massachusetts delegation get behind him?" One of the Massachusetts delegates said a few hours after the convention adjourned that had the Massachusetts delegates voted as a unit on even the 8th ballot, (that was on Saturday morning, June 12th, after hope for Wood was abandoned) *the convention would have stampeded to Coolidge*, in spite of the Friday night conference at which the leaders agreed on Harding.

Another uncertain factor from the Coolidge point of view was Lodge. A venerable Senator from Massachusetts when Coolidge was but a political stripling, a ring-leader of the Anti-Wilson forces on which the 1920 campaign was largely built and permanent Chairman of the convention, he naturally looked with amazement at the rising Coolidge tide. So at least Coolidge enthusiasts maintained. Provided the deadlock lasted long enough Lodge himself was considered in the dark horse class. He had a golden chance as maker of the keynote speech. But Lodge's speech sagged into an anti-administration attack filled with "waspish malice,"<sup>1</sup> and thereafter his stock gradually subsided. Lodge's attitude was that Coolidge was a favorite son and as such entitled to a

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase is Mark Sullivan's.



## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

couple of complimentary ballots. Wood, however, was Lodge's real choice and he made no bones about it. Accordingly on the 3rd ballot he swung to Wood, taking with him such delegates as Edward A. Coolidge, the late Edward Thurston, Gasper G. Bacon and Lewis Parkhurst.

Among the thousands who journeyed to the Chicago Coliseum in 1920 on business or excitement bent, a large number dropped in at Coolidge Row sometime or other. Compared to Leonard Wood's gorgeous headquarters—with its fine trappings, long rows of seductive booths and well organized booster personnel—the Coolidge show was not impressive. Like its leader there was little in the show window. But one feature will not be easily forgotten. At the entrance, ever watchful day and night—even toward the end of the week when it was obvious Coolidge could not receive Presidential honors—stood a man with a handful of leather bound booklets and an inexhaustible fund of Coolidge enthusiasm. New-comers saw “a man of medium height and more than medium girth with a round face and glasses covering his fine, earnest eyes; a man sixty-three years of age,<sup>1</sup> whose physicians had more than once cautioned him to go slow, but remained on duty even when younger lieutenants grew restless

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<sup>1</sup>In the language of Bruce Barton, for whose original portrait of Stearns, the first and best written, see the Outlook, Sept. 8, 1920.

## FROM SEA TO SEA

or went to bed or yielded to the lure of Convention Hall." Here Stearns nurtured the seed which suddenly sprang to harvest on the Saturday following at 7 p. m.

One of those who has been largely credited with the Coolidge nomination is James B. Reynolds, that rotund and efficient fixer of other men's fates, who had long been in the game as Secretary of the Republican National Committee. After the nomination Reynolds opened headquarters in the Parker House, Boston, where he became a sort of liaison officer between the Harding and Coolidge campaign officers.

### III

The history of the nomination is too well known to need elaboration. For four ballots on Friday, June 11th, 1920, General Wood and Governor Lowden of Illinois were unable to shake one another off. Four hundred and ninety-two votes were necessary for choice; Wood on the fourth ballot received a maximum of three hundred fourteen and a half, Lowden, two hundred and eighty-nine. The Wood forces wanted to continue balloting; an overnight recess was forced on them. What happened between sunset and dawn is now tolerably well known. In room 404 of the Blackstone Hotel, George Harvey plus the so-called

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Senate oligarchy gathered. According to the account traceable to Harvey the conference was of elastic and of changing personnel; Brandegee and Harvey were standbys, while Senators Lodge, Wadsworth and Calder of New York, Reed Smoot of Utah, Medill McCormick of Illinois, State Chairman Hert of Kentucky and others figured. Here Harding was agreed upon as the most available to break the impasse; in the morning the leaders were instructed to handle their delegations accordingly.

On what trifling events history sometimes hinges! A Balkan assassin's bullet started the World War. A shot fired in the backwoods of Pennsylvania was said to have caused the seven years war in Europe. A Senator<sup>1</sup> whose name is constantly in the papers, states that Harding's nomination was caused by the fact that the Blackstone Hotel charged \$12 a day for rooms. The midnight conferees believed, according to this Senator, that an agreement might be reached on the following Monday. But one Senator arose and stated that he was paying \$12 a day for a rotten room and he'd be d—d if he would stay longer! The argument was conclusive.

Whether the oligarchy chose better than they knew, history must show. That his heart was

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<sup>1</sup>Inasmuch as the Senator was not one of those included in the conference some readers will take the statement with a grain of salt.

## FROM SEA TO SEA

thoroughly kind all who came into contact with Harding know. He was hated by none. If he was sometimes blinded to the shortcomings of some of those about him, nevertheless, with the best that in him lay he lived up to—in fact surpassed—not only his own expectations, but those of others.

After Senator Harding's nomination on the sixth ballot Saturday and the tenth ballot of the convention, the Senate leaders continued in the scheduled plans of Room 404. As soon as quiet could be restored down went the gavel. Up went Medill McCormick. He gave lung to the Vice Presidential nomination of Senator Lenroot of Wisconsin. It fell flat. The convention refused to be whipped any longer. Suddenly occurred one of those events so refreshing and rare in organized politics, a thing unprecedented and spontaneous. Judge Wallace McCammant of Portland, Oregon,—Oregon mind you—gained the platform, and, in a voice reaching the corners declared "that his delegation had been instructed to vote for Senator Lodge. . . . But there is another son of Massachusetts. . . ."

He could scarcely get further before the name of Coolidge was ringing through the girders. By various states the name was seconded with the rapidity of machine gun fire; and in an avalanche of votes Coolidge of Massachusetts, "simple, sound

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and true," carried the convention with six hundred seventy-four and a half votes on the first ballot.

## IV

More than a thousand miles away in a double room on the fourth floor of the Adams House in Boston, the telephone rang. Governor Coolidge, spending here the evening as usual,<sup>1</sup> went to the 'phone himself. He took the message, turned to Mrs. Coolidge and repeated the single phrase:

"Nominated for Vice President."

Crossing his knees and taking a pad and pencil he wrote the following brief statement:

"The nomination for the Vice Presidency, coming to me unsought and unexpectedly, I accept as an honor and a duty. It will be especially pleasing to be associated with my old friend, Senator Warren G. Harding, our candidate for president. The Republican party has adopted a sound platform, chosen a wise leader, and is united. It deserves the confidence of the American people. That confidence I shall endeavor to secure."

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<sup>1</sup>Although not "interested" in the convention, Coolidge earlier in the evening is reputed to have walked three rattling miles in forty-five minutes. The usually lethargic Lincoln "played hard at handball" on the day of his nomination, we are told by Herndon.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SECOND IN COMMAND

IN THE public mind Coolidge's stock took something of a slump during the Vice Presidency. It took a similar slump in political and social Washington. This was natural under the circumstances which brought him into office. That it was deliberately brought about by Coolidge himself there is also reason to believe.

Originally when Coolidge became Harding's running-mate the public had been fed the legend of a vivid strike-breaker. He was visioned flashing the sabre at disorderly elements of society, a sort of young Lochinvar come out of the East. The confidence of those who knew him better rested on entirely different qualities: his knowledge of men and affairs, of governmental processes, his dependability, his capacity for taking infinite pains, his fundamental belief that the road to political success lay through doing the job at hand better than others could do it. The Lochin-



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var picture was, of course, all wrong. Consequently there was a feeling of disappointment when there slowly emerged from the canvas what John N. Cole had likened to "a singed cat, who's better than he looks."

Coolidge, as was observed in Chapter V, had at times exhibited certain feline faculties. Among them was the knack of being always on the job, of bringing home the mice or bacon, as the case might be, although apparently asleep. He was by nature the antithesis of a fighter. But when hounded to a corner, his back could arch and he could dash with sudden fury. The best examples of his quaint humor have been of repartee. Likewise the best examples of his courage. "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, at any time," he flashed back at Samuel Gompers. The country will recall with admiration, for it was solidly behind him, that day when at the height of the Teapot Dome Oil exposures the Senate attempted to impose its will on the Chief Executive in relation to Cabinet dismissals, and he hurled back at them: "I do not propose to sacrifice any innocent man for my own welfare, nor do I propose to maintain in office any unfit man for my own welfare."

These vivid flashes were often followed by periods of retirement, concession. . . .

The Vice Presidency, like the Governorship,

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was another period for discipline, self-appointed. Many persons say nothing because they have nothing to say; others because the time is not ripe. He did not care to make many speeches. "My purpose," he had said to an interviewer not long after inauguration, "is to support the administration. If in discussing a public question upon which the administration has not yet reached a determination, I took a definite position, it might be at variance with the decision finally reached." He thought of himself as the second in command, whose job was to fight for the organization when he could do so and to shut up when he couldn't. Coolidge's conception of the military aspect of office is further revealed in his first remark to the first member of Harding's Cabinet who called when death had promoted to the top its silent member.

"There is nothing to do but close the ranks and go ahead."

This was another period when Coolidge employed and developed that watertight compartment mind of his. The faculty was precisely employed in his dual capacity as presiding officer of the Senate and Vice President. The nominating speech at Chicago, which dwelt upon a man "fitted to become President should occasion arise," and Mr. Harding's determination (perhaps hastened by the popular belief that Coolidge was the

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strongest tail-end of a ticket ever put forward),<sup>1</sup> to make the second in command a member of the Cabinet—both seemed prophetic. It is possible that both the Administration and the Senate believed the Vice President ought to become a liaison officer between the White House and the Hill. Perhaps some members, suspicious of the new role, feared he would so become. Both groups were soon put at ease. At that smooth, impressive table where twice weekly the Board of Directors of the United States meet, Coolidge sat, and watched, and listened. Occasionally he stated an opinion. It is to be doubted if he ever injected, or gave the impression of injecting, an opinion *from the point of view of the presiding officer of the Senate*. Somehow or other those watertight compartments must have impressed themselves on the remainder of the Cabinet; for as time went on they looked upon him as a member of the family. Somehow or other the same quality must have impressed itself on the Senate; for in due course that body looked upon him without suspicion.

And if any Senator ever went so far as to take the Chairman aside with the admonition to “loosen up, lapse, humanize yourself” and tell us what’s what in the Cabinet, the chances are—he never repeated the suggestion.

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<sup>1</sup>Compare Roosevelt.



*Copyright Harris & Ewing*

The first picture of President Coolidge at his desk in the White House Executive Offices



## SECOND IN COMMAND

Again, as in Lieutenant-Governor days, the Vice Presidency was an oasis for thought. The immediate responsibility was not as great as he had weathered, though the social and legislative routine, with the Cabinet councils added, was enough to break the average man's spirit, if not his back. That he was constantly thinking, unconsciously fitting himself for the task ahead, there is abundant evidence. One instance will suffice. Those who maintain that Coolidge never framed an issue, that he reluctantly followed Mr. Mellon's lead in tax reduction, will find instruction in the statement made by the Vice President *in May* 1921,<sup>1</sup> that the most important problem facing the country, from a governmental point of view, was taxation and finance.

"The very great importance of this question is reflected in the course of legislation," said the Vice President. "The House and Senate are giving particular attention to the financial situation in the preparation of revenue and tariff legislation. Private business of the country, as well as public, is involved, and the character of taxation that may be levied by Congress touches the business of the country as a whole."

In spite of the new orbit and his first automobile (supplied by taxpayers,) his humor remained on

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<sup>1</sup>Interview by Chas. S. Groves in the Boston Sunday Globe.



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tap. As always it took the form of quaint analysis of a given situation. It was dry, analytical, reflective; never boisterous, imaginative, colorful. With its owner it was transplanted from the Adams House, Boston, to the New Willard Hotel, Washington. ("More hotel life, I suppose," Mrs. Coolidge had said cheerily.)

To appreciate the following one should know Grafton D. Cushing, that fine looking and sartorially perfect ex-Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. On the morning of Mr. Harding's inaugural, the Hon. Benjamin Loring Young, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, dropped in at the New Willard to pay his respects, all dogged-up for the ceremony in topper, cutaway, et al. Coolidge eyed him carefully, from hat to toe, at length observing with his inimitable drawl,

"Good morning, Loring. Seen Grra-afton<sup>1</sup> lately?"

The following may be set down either as "humor" or "silence;" in fact, it is cross-indexed under both headings in our file of 371 Coolidge stories. The Vice President had just turned the earth while the workmen laid the cornerstone. It is not designated whether the occasion was the dedication of the new Temple to Pythias, or the

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<sup>1</sup>The "a" pronounced as in graft.

## SECOND IN COMMAND

Home for Derelict Dogs. The master of ceremonies urged Coolidge to say a word. The crowd waited, expectantly, for some one to speak. The Vice President considered. He gazed fixedly at the earth. At length he pointed, with his finger downward, and nasaled,—

“That’s - a - fine - fishworm,”—and walked off to his waiting equipage.

His habits of mind changed little, his outward habits less than generally supposed. From a small hotel suite he had graduated to a larger suite. The back of Keith’s Theatre could be seen from both. Instead of presiding over the Senate on Beacon Hill, he sat in the rostrum on Capitol Hill. The daily walk was not across the Boston Common, but across historic Washington Gardens. The old black law bag was replaced by a new edition; Secretary Long of Boston days by secretary Edward T. Clark, who had served in similar capacity for Senator Lodge, and whose father had been a congregational pastor in Northampton. For those who dote on intimate details of the mighty the following “inside” information<sup>1</sup> is cheerfully set down: “The Vice President has a light breakfast. When Mrs. Coolidge is in Washington they have their meals in the hotel dining-room. During Mrs. Coolidge’s brief absence in

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<sup>1</sup>Furnished by Charles S. Groves.

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

Northampton to see the "boys" the Vice President has been in the habit of breakfasting with his secretary and Mrs. Clark at the latter's home in 16th Street. Mr. Coolidge finds the cooking at the Clark home a welcome change from the regulation breakfast menu at the hotel. He eats sparingly both at breakfast and lunch, the latter usually in the Senate restaurant. One of his favorite luncheon dishes is hominy, similar to the 'hulled corn' of New England, and a bowl of milk."

Of Coolidge as a social flower reams might, and probably have been, written. His gift for clever persiflage, his technique at keeping the verbal ball rolling with those nice and necessary nothings, his rating in the meaningless ding and dong of parlor chatter—was hardly of the highest order. A hundred corroborative anecdotes might be told as easily as one. There will be therefore none. Undoubtedly they have been exaggerated. Yet as one writer knows, the President may be unexpectedly interesting, put one unexpectedly at ease. In fact one fancies that his dinner table silences were but the armor of shyness, or of boredom, as the case might be. Added proof of Fate's whimsies can be cited: that men of Lincoln's and Wilson's peaceful mould should be at the helm during bitter wars; that Roosevelt must exert his energies upon the River of Doubt; and that our taciturn Vermonter should twice be sentenced to terms of

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official dining out. When he found that edibles and epigrams did not go together he concentrated on the former. Into the wigwams of vivacity it was Mrs. Coolidge who carried the pipe of peace.

In the Senate, while at first paying strict attention to his duties as Judge of proceedings, he evidenced, as time went on, an increasing desire for retirement. Occasionally, after periods of gavel rapping, interspersed with demanding whether the Senator from Whoosic would or would not yield to the Senator from Whatsic, Coolidge availed himself of the privilege of calling a substitute. Whereupon he retired to the Vice Presidential office in a nearby part of the building. Here a large personal and political correspondence, requests for speeches, magazine articles, etc., were indulged in. One who frequently watched the Senate proceedings gained the impression that some of Coolidge's statements were prepared while in the rostrum, one compartment of the watertight mind ruminating the history of Massachusetts for let us say a "National Geographic" article, the other compartment subconsciously attuned to the never ending drone of oratory. The reader to this point need not be told that he presided justly, without partisanship. Democrat equally with Republican found recognition from the rostrum: upon the Vice President's retiring a Democratic rival was as likely as an ad-

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ministration leader to be called upon to take the chair, whereupon the nodding galleries might be awakened by a Western burr or a Southern drawl in place of the Yankee twang. Upon the heights a native accent did not desert him. He could still, as Whiting tells us, pronounce the word "cow" in four syllables.

It seems to have been a period of more or less unconscious preparation for greater tasks. In that particular connection a letter to the writer is interesting. It is here given although actually written during the height of the Teapot Dome Oil disclosures, from the White House, and by the personal friend—prejudiced if you wish—who had lived there during a large part of Coolidge's incumbency.

February 19, 1924

My dear Mr. Green:

You ask me whether during the recent months, I have noticed any change in the President. I have not. As he has gone up from one post of responsibility to a higher, it has always seemed to me as if he had been training himself for the higher place, and met his responsibilities serenely and fully from the start.

*That is what has impressed me in the terrible responsibilities that are on him now.* (Italics are inserted.)

A stranger meeting him on a matter of business on August 4th, probably would have gone away from the interview with the impression that he had been years on the job. Not a few gave expression to this thought. I see no change, unless growth is a sign of change.

Sincerely,

(Signed) F. W. STEARNS.

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From his vantage point Coolidge observed, studied, catalogued the Senators for future reference: their opinions and probable actions under a given set of circumstances.

All told, Coolidge in the Vice Presidency was something of a disappointment. He did not fire the public. He did not fire hostesses. With the exception of an occasional Boston Sunday feature, he rarely furnished front page "copy." Him, as others, the office shrouded in its soporific mantle; for having been in nearly constant office fourteen years, he must, in office, take a rest. His speeches and writings, with few exceptions, were colorless. His mind appeared to sag as the athlete's body sags before the race. A prophetic trainer bade him ungird his loins—that he might gird them tighter when the time should come.

### II.

The Sixty-seventh Congress was long, and, at its death, little lamented. Before the end President Harding often talked of a swing into Alaska. At first he thought of it as a combination sightseeing and instruction trip. But advisors told him he must give the country an account of stewardship, an angle which he viewed with little favor. More than once he said to us, "Don't call it a campaign



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tour. If the Chief Executive is to be placed in that light he'll cancel the trip."

On bidding Coolidge goodbye for the summer Harding is said to have remarked his envy.

Correspondence, and some unfinished articles, accompanied Coolidge to his Massachusetts home. At his coming Northampton bestired herself as usual, but upon being satisfied that the Vice President was still "Cal", interest subsided. The Clarke School for the Deaf was still administered by Miss Yale; Miss Willoughby was at her post. No one had raised the rent on the \$32 house: Bob Weir had moved to San Francisco; but Phil Gleason was still a blacksmith: James Lucey charged too little for a good pair of soles; and of an evening Judge Field could still be seen picking his way across the car tracks from the Main Street office to the Draper House lobby.

But even the outskirts of Northampton is partly city. Cooling though might be the view from Round Hill toward Mount Holyoke and Mount Tom, the Connecticut River Valley could and did get piping hot in July. Real hills, real rest, lay further to the North. His stepmother was dead. But his father was on the farm.

It was a typical day when they changed cars at Bellows Falls. An hour later as the noon train puffed into Ludlow the air had the right smell and it smelled better and better as the Ford rattled

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off twelve winding miles to the "Notch," past familiar lakes, shimmering like the sea. When they got to Dan McCuen's cottage the Vice President thought that he was home. When they honked up the hill toward Cilley's store, and when Aunt Grace Wilder said, "Cal, you're a mite thin,"—he knew he was home. He allowed he'd do nothing for a space.

So the Vice President went to the dentist at Woodstock, visited the countryside folks, and took things easy. The dentist is particularly remembered by a certain student of Coolidge. People were all wrong, he said, in this talk of Lincoln-like poverty. The old man had something laid away; and, the dentist added with pride, *"I've fixed up Calvin with the best bridge work and gold insets money can buy. Look at his mouth. He's got 'em yet!"*

### III.

Outwardly optimistic for the President's recovery when the first bulletins of sickness came from San Francisco, the Vice President was inwardly depressed. He appreciated both the prize and the responsibilities which might come. That his uppermost feelings were the proper sentiments which he expressed in public is the consensus of all who were near him at the time. Something

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like foreboding enveloped him. He had heard earlier prophecies of Harding's ill health. One particular conversation probably passed through his mind. Only a few weeks earlier a Boston friend, whom we shall call Fred Hill, spent an evening in the Vice Presidential suite at the New Willard.

"Governor," said Hill, "I've heard bad reports of Mr. Harding's condition. You'll be President before the year is up." At the moment Mrs. Coolidge was playing solitaire on the back of the piano.

"Fred Hill," she exclaimed, "how can you say such an awful thing!"

Now and then Coolidge strolled over to the village store to get the bulletins from San Francisco. Florence Cilley, C. J. Blanchard and others gave him the news. It was encouraging. From the Coolidge family went up a devout prayer of thanks—not lip service—but spoken from the heart. Foreboding seemed to lift. Calvin Coolidge attended to a little correspondence, strolled through the countryside, drank in the mountains—cool and long and green—and stretched himself in the home of his ancestors.

On August 2nd, at 9 P.M., he went upstairs to bed.

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## SECOND IN COMMAND

"Just before midnight<sup>1</sup> E. C. Geisser, assistant secretary to the Vice President, and Joseph N. McInerney, his chauffeur, rushed into my room at the hotel, saying: 'Wake up! Did you know the President was dead?'

" 'How do you know?'

" 'We have just received a telegram from George Christian saying that the President died at 7:30 o'clock.'

"Hurriedly dressing, we covered the eleven miles from the village of Bridgewater to the Coolidge home in less than that many minutes. The telephone operator at Bridgewater also sent a messenger to advise Mr. Coolidge of the President's death. The elder Coolidge was the first one awakened.

"The Vice President and his wife came down the rickety stairs to receive further information. Mr. Coolidge was one step in advance. The stairway is too narrow for two abreast.

"I greeted him with: 'Good morning, Mr. President,' the first time he had ever been so addressed. His face was a character study. He mechanically shook hands with me, and there was a slight lowering of his voice as he said: 'Is this information authentic?'

"The telegram was handed to him by Mr. Geis-

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<sup>1</sup>The above account is set down by Mr. William H. Crawford in *Colliers' Weekly*, May 25, 1923.

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ser. He took it, walked over to the small center table on which a kerosene lamp was burning, having just been lighted by his father. Its wick had not been properly trimmed and the light was poor. Mrs. Coolidge said: 'I'll get the lamp from our room, Calvin.' Returning in a moment, she placed it also on the table.

"During the interval the President had not said a word. Then he read the message over carefully and passed it to me. There was an awed silence. The reporters who had by this time come from Ludlow at breakneck speed gathered near the door. Mrs. Coolidge seated herself on the arm of a chair and rested her clasped hands on her knees, while the elder Coolidge tiptoed nervously around the room.

"Suddenly the President said: 'I will dictate a statement.' And then he retired with his secretary. We could hear the typewriter clicking away on the first message ever given out by President Calvin Coolidge.

"Mrs. Coolidge, in order to break the nervous strain, began a conversation with the newspaper men. She spoke of her sympathy for Mrs. Harding and expressed her belief that so brave a woman would resolutely bear up under her burden.

"Presently the President came out and handed us his first message, which was entirely characteristic."

## SECOND IN COMMAND

### IV.

Mr. Coolidge had carefully dictated the following:—

“Reports have reached me, which I fear are correct, that President Harding is gone. The world has lost a great and good man. I mourn his loss. He was my Chief and my friend.

“It will be my purpose to carry out the policies which he has begun for the service of the American people and for meeting their responsibilities wherever they may arise.

“For this purpose I shall seek the co-operation of all those who have been associated with the President during his term of office. Those who have given their efforts to assist him I wish to remain in office that they may assist me. I have faith that God will direct the destinies of our nation.

“It is my intention to remain here until I can obtain the correct form for the oath of office, which will be administered to me by my father, who is a notary public, if that will meet the necessary requirement. I expect to leave for Washington during the day.”<sup>1</sup>

C. C.

They were just outside the alcove, where the bookshelf is crowded and the family albums lie on

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<sup>1</sup>Compare Theodore Roosevelt's statement upon being told of McKinley's death: "I shall take the oath at once in accordance with your request, and in this hour of deep and terrible national bereavement I wish to state that it shall be my aim to continue absolutely unbroken the policy of President McKinley for peace and prosperity and honor of our beloved country."



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top. The four-legged table stood almost in the passage-way; a small hand Bible was on it; and the kerosene lamp wick was newly trimmed.

At this table in the sitting-room of the little white farm house, Colonel John Coolidge gave his son the oath of office as President at 2.30 A.M. on the morning of August 3rd, 1923.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE START AS PRESIDENT

THAT same afternoon President Coolidge started the eighteen-hour journey to Washington. An outside sitting-room in the New Willard became the temporary White House. In him there was little change beyond the fact that the days of mourning found him more dignified, and more than usually serious. People were impressed by the nice balance maintained between sorrow and business-like preparation to tighten the grip on his own fortunes.

The country was unperturbed. Good subordinates make good leaders. The Coolidge clutch moved forward from one gear to another, noiselessly, as in a high-grade machine. On August 4th he acted as if he had always been President. He was the same as ever. But others saw him through a different lens. The twist of fate, the miracle of power, had done its work. Silences heretofore considered negative were now consid-

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ered wells of knowledge. Every one rushed to see him. Cabinet officers, politicians of every sort, old friends, new friends, would-be friends, labor leaders, railway officials, journalists. Rumors of changes and resignations went the rounds, were believed in the best circles. Most persons on the periphery of events were excited; contact with Coolidge calmed them.

"He hates ———," said the wife of a Cabinet officer's secretary, mentioning the Cabinet officer. "He is going to dismiss him." "The President's scared out of his wits; can't say a word," remarked a close friend of Hiram Johnson's. "There is no interest in Coolidge," said a well known eastern editor; "he doesn't know how to interest people." "Why doesn't he hire some one to dramatize him, humanize him," complained William Allen White in Kansas.

Daugherty's resignation was more than usually imminent. It was to be put on the grounds of ill health. But after conferring with the President, Mr. Daugherty said his health was better. He even smiled.

Gradually the rumors faded. In due time the new Chief moved to the Presidential Executive offices; in appropriate time after Mrs. Harding had gathered her sad belongings, the Coolidge family also moved. In speech and action Coolidge carried out his intention just to "close the ranks and go ahead."

# THE START AS PRESIDENT

## II.

During his first week in office Coolidge made a firm impression on the press. By that is meant particularly the correspondents who get into actual contact with the news, the country's human telegraph wires. Among them are both the most enthusiastic and the most cynical. Before many of them many Presidents have passed in review. They are experts in human appraisal. To face a roomfull under such circumstances is no small test, and Coolidge faced it promptly. He was friendly, inquired names, but nothing more. One might have expected the attitude "I'm new at the game; be easy with me." On the contrary, the President was master of the situation. Harding's desk often had mementos; one noticed in the early conferences that Coolidge's desk was cleared of business and, like its owner's tongue, devoid of trinkets. One thing was immediately discovered, that the new President could and would talk, quickly, precisely, and to the point. He even talked too much! How conscientiously in those days he took up the little points.<sup>1</sup> "I haven't given

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<sup>1</sup>"It is the President's manifest desire to be helpful to all and fair to each. This leads him to answer questions about his attitude on water pollution in Raritan Bay, or his views on the relative merits of athletics and scholarship on college education with almost the same deliberateness as he does questions concerning national and international policy . . ." Harold Phelps Stokes, "N. Y. Evening Post," (*Hic Jacet* December 31, 1923.)

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that point particular consideration," holding on to the first syllables.

The following is from George McAdams' worth while account in the N. Y. Sunday Times:

"By long-established rule the Presidents have not been quoted directly; but one newspaper published the interview entire, in the form of questions and answers. It throws so much light on the new President that it is given here.

"There is nothing I wish to say at the present time about the policies of the Administration. There will not be anything done about them until after the final interment of the President.

"I am very glad to have the opportunity to greet you. I want you to know that the executive office always will be open just so far as possible to give out any information that you or your readers may be interested to have. A good many of you I know personally. This is your Government. You can exercise a great and helpful influence over the administration of it, and I know you will give the Administration that necessary co-operation.'

Q.—Mr. President, will we have the regular conferences with the President at the White House twice a week?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Under the old schedule?

A.—Yes. That will be arranged in due time.

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Q.—May I ask about the resignation of Cabinet officers?

A.—My statement of yesterday covered that.

Q.—Do you have them all before you?

A.—I have none. My statement of yesterday covers that.

Q.—Can you say anything about a proclamation?

A.—Of course the arrangements for the funeral are going forward. The details will be given out during the day by the Secretary of State and by Colonel Sherrill.

Q.—When will you give out your proclamation?

A.—Some time during the day.

Q.—Have you the draft before you?

A.—I looked it over last night, but it will be signed and given out some time today, I think.

Q.—Have your physician and secretary been appointed?

A.—Mr. Christian is the secretary of the President and Dr. Sawyer is the physician of the President. Everything stands as it is until you are notified to the contrary.

Q.—You said there will be no announcement of the Administration policies until after the funeral. Does that mean you will then simply summarize your views?

A.—There is no interpretation necessary to be



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put on my statement. My statement stands just as I gave it.

Q.—Will that also apply to any question relative to an extra session of Congress?

A.—I think that question is answered by my statement.

Q.—Are the Cabinet members returning to Washington?

A.—Yes, they are.

Q.—Have you any date in mind for a Cabinet meeting at any time soon?

A.—No.

Q.—And whether or not, as usual, you will hold the semi-weekly Cabinet meetings?

A.—I expect to do so. I do not know just what arrangements have been made about it. Of course, the President was not expected until about the 26th of August. Cabinet members very evidently have made commitments which would prevent their being in Washington very much. Of course, they all stand ready to come here whenever their presence is required.

Q.—Is there any word from members of the Cabinet as to their arrangements?

A.—No, I have not seen any communications from them. Here is Secretary Denby, who has just come in. The only two members of the Cabinet who were here last night were Secretary Hughes and Postmaster General New. The dis-

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tribution of the others you probably know better than I do.

Q.—Will there be any interruption of the negotiations with Mexico?

A.—I do not know of any reason for interrupting any negotiations. My statement that things will stand as they are until you are notified differently will cover that. I thank you very much for coming in, gentlemen.

Q.—When will we see you again?

A.—Keep in touch with Mr. Preston."

From the strain of early days he took relief in the usual form; humorous analysis of a given situation. One of the correspondents suggested a cheer for President Coolidge (which suggestion he overheard). Others in the back of the group, realizing that Mrs. Harding was still in the White House, murmured disapproval, which Coolidge also overheard.

"Seems to be a-opposition to my administration already," he remarked, with a wry little, quizzical smile.

But when an enthusiastic visitor rushed to Brigadier General Sawyer, Mr. Harding's personal physician, exclaiming, "How do *you* do, Senator Lodge?", Mr. Coolidge allowed himself a cough and two loud chuckles.

The G. O. P. promptly realized—but no more promptly than the President—that he was their

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

best hope for the 1924 nomination; immediately those who had found little to stimulate them in the shadowy Vice President, gave vent to liberal praise. Generally speaking, there was a tendency to give the new man at the helm a chance. There was even danger of building up another myth like the young Lochinvar picture. Radical weeklies like the New York "Nation" kept the balance, saying that this sort of thing was sentimental tommyrot, or words to that effect; and there were other smart litterateurs who held forth in liberal weeklies. Some complained that the new leader was not a crusader. One prophesied that if he failed of nomination Coolidge would at least be a satisfactory performer at local banquets, and added patronizingly: "Well, after several weeks what do we find on our hands? An honest, industrious, patient conformist of the upper average type, whose intellectual counterpart is moderately prominent in every fair-sized town." Which leads to the irrelevant wish: that all of us critics of the Wilsons and the Hardings and the Coolidges might be given a chance to see how many days, or even hours, their intellectual nimbleness would bear the strain of office in the White House.

Following the excitement of accession and the generally favorable impression of the early weeks,



*Copyright Harris & Ewing*

Mrs. Calvin Coolidge



## THE START AS PRESIDENT

there came another sag in the Coolidge stock. The President busied himself with three matters: First, details of executive and administrative duties (which he handled with greater precision and dispatch than any President of recent times); second, moves leading toward nomination (which were handled with unerring judgment by and in his name); third, preparation for the duel with hostile Congress (in which his own party was divided), and upon which his administration was largely to be judged. So far as the country was concerned Coolidge had drawn his head into a turtle shell. No speeches were made, no announcements were forthcoming and from the negative policy no clamor could dissuade him. During those weeks he listened to more concentrated advice than any of our 110,000,000 inhabitants. He was the mouthpiece of the funnel into which the voices poured. On December 6, 1923, the process was reversed; the product as digested by one man was spoken back through an amplifier.

On the day of his maiden speech to Congress Coolidge looked slimmer, younger than ever. One got at times the impression of a child using grave words. He appeared unusually pale and sleek. His poise and dignity were sure; but the writer, sitting directly above his head, observed how the thin hands trembled turning the manu-



script. That was especially at the beginning of the speech.<sup>1</sup>

The speech was well received. The opening tribute to his dead Chief was tempered, affectionate and true. It was the kind of thing that Coolidge does well, given time for consideration. The speech was not, as could hardly have been expected from one of Coolidge's mould, a vibrant battle cry. It prophesied no millennium, no panacea for world happiness, flashed no Wilsonian crusader's sword. He said the League of Nations was a closed incident so far as America was concerned, but the World Court (with proper reservations), he commended to favorable consideration.

Mr. Coolidge plainly opposed the following:

1. Tariff revision. "A constant revision of the tariff by Congress because it is disturbing and harmful."

2. Russian recognition. "Our Government does not propose to enter into relations with an-

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<sup>1</sup>Compare Mark Sullivan's description:— "There is something about Mr. Coolidge's fragile figure, his pale, boyish features, his blue eyes and very blond head that makes an ingratiating appeal. His appearance seems to say: 'I am only a young fellow here, and I am new on this job, and I hope you will give me a kindly hand.'

"The truth about it is that Mr. Coolidge really has plenty of self-confidence and abundant faith in his capacity to handle his job. But while this appeal is not in Mr. Coolidge's mind, it will always be inherent in his personal appearance, and will be one of his great assets. Wherever he appears the crowd will tend to feel: 'This is a well-intentioned young fellow and he's got a hard job; let's give him a boost.'"

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other regime, which refuses to recognize the sanctity of international obligations."

3. Cancellation of the Allied Debt. "I do not favor the cancellation of this debt, but I see no objection to adjusting it in accordance with the principles adopted for the British debt."

4. Bonus. "Favorable mention for much of the American Legion program . . . But I do not favor the granting of a bonus."

5. Farmers. "No complicated scheme of relief, no plan for Government fixing of prices, no resort to the public Treasury will be of any value. *Simple and direct methods put into operation by the farmer himself* are the only real sources for restoration."

With equal plainness Mr. Coolidge favored the following:

1. Tax reduction. Discussion of this subject was given more space than any other. "A proposed plan has been presented by the Secretary of the Treasury, which has my unqualified approval . . . The country wants this measure to have right-of-way over all others."

2. Abolition of tax-exempt securities.

3. World Court, with proper restrictions.

4. Prohibition. "It is my duty to enforce such laws. . . . To prevent smuggling the Coast Guard should be greatly strengthened."

5. Proper protection of coal in emergencies.

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6. Strengthening of the Army and Navy. "For several years we have been decreasing the Army and Navy personnel . . . to the danger point."

The comparative ease of summarizing the speech, the ease of picking kernel phrases here and there shows that the message was not the usual type of political statement in which "on the one hands" and "on the other hands" are confusingly balanced.

In short, the document was particularly refreshing to the friends who feared, and discouraging to enemies who hoped, that Coolidge could not, would not, dared not, take a definite stand. Not only did he express opinions, but he expressed them in one, two, three manner. He stated precisely on which side he stood of every important fence. Generally speaking, the speech was considered sane, courageous, statesmanlike, without, as one editor put it, "pussyfooting politics and pollyfoxing pettifoggry."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps more than Coolidge's unequivocal stand on the Bonus, the throwing back of the agricultural problem into the face of the farmer (telling him in so many words that he must look out for himself), took the greatest amount of courage. So, at least, it was regarded by many observers, as well as by certain members of the President's inner

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<sup>1</sup>Philadelphia Public Ledger, supposedly independent with administration leanings.

## THE START AS PRESIDENT

circle. The line of reasoning was typical of the Coolidge belief that in such problems the individual and the community must work out its own salvation. But when it is considered that in some sections of the wheat belt, notably Minnesota, North Dakota, and farther west, there was actual distress; that large groups of range cattle owners and farmer groups (stimulated, of course, by previous clap-trap promises of legislative help), had based their hopes on Federal intervention; and that the important North Dakota primaries, with Hiram Johnson in the lists, were but a couple of weeks off—it will be appreciated that one, and only one, factor was involved in Coolidge's analysis: the permanent good of the farmer. For Coolidge told him that he must organize himself as other businesses are organized. It is worth while quoting:—

“The distress is most acute among those wholly dependent upon one crop. Wheat acreage was greatly expanded and has not yet been sufficiently reduced. A large amount is raised for export which has to meet the competition in the world market of large amounts raised on land much cheaper and much more productive.

“No complicated scheme of relief, no plan for Government fixing of prices, no resort to the public Treasury will be of any permanent value in establishing agriculture. Simple and direct methods put into operation by the farmer himself are the only real sources for restoration.

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"Indirectly the farmer must be relieved by a reduction of national and local taxation. He must be assisted by the reorganization of the freight-rate structure which could reduce charges on his production. To make this fully effective there ought to be railroad consolidations. Cheaper fertilizers must be provided.

"He must have organization. His customer with whom he exchanges products of the farm for those of industry is organized, labor is organized, business is organized, and there is no way for agriculture to meet this unless it, too, is organized. The acreage of wheat is too large. Unless we can meet the world market at a profit, we must stop raising for export. Organization would help to reduce acreage.

"Systems of co-operative marketing created by the farmers themselves, supervised by competent management, without doubt would be of assistance, but they cannot wholly solve the problem. Our agricultural schools ought to have thorough courses in the theory of organization and co-operative marketing.

"Diversification is necessary. Those farmers who raise their living on their land are not greatly in distress. Such loans as are wisely needed to assist buying stock and other materials to start in this direction should be financed through a Government agency as a temporary and emergency expedient.

"The remaining difficulty is the disposition of exportable wheat. I do not favor the permanent interference of the Government in this problem.

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That probably would increase the trouble by increasing production. But it seems feasible to provide Government assistance to exports, and authority should be given the War Finance Corporation to grant, in its discretion, the most liberal terms of payment for fats and grains exported for the direct benefit of the farm."

Sometimes he dismissed a materially important subject within the compass of a few phrases. An outstanding example was the curt remark: "I do not favor the granting of a bonus." "The message was notable for its brevity, its directness, its simplicity," said Professor Albert Bushnell Hart.

No confidences are violated in setting down a rare instance where the laugh has been on Coolidge. Hugh Gibson of Belgium fame, the up and coming Minister to Switzerland, dropped in to see the President a few days later. Scene: The oval executive chamber with the big glass windows and the sun streaming in on the President's back. The following ensued:

Gibson: "That was a fine message, Mr. President."

President: "H'm? Thanks."

Gibson: "Especially the part about the diplomatic service."

President, uneasily (recalling vaguely that he had skirted the subject): "Eh — Oh — Ye—as."

Gibson: "You remember you devoted a whole



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sentence, twelve words, in fact, to the Foreign Service (President looks angry), *But - only - ten - words - to - the Bonus!*

President sees point. Cackles at own expense.  
(Exit Gibson. Enter next delegation.)

The speech to Congress was a platform on which Coolidge could stand and its favorable reception was the signal for opening the pre-convention campaign. It unleashed the Coolidge boom. Numerous signs had already pointed in that direction, but the President had not, in fact never did, make a direct announcement. When, however, on December 8th, Frank Stearns announced that "The friends of President Coolidge are organizing under the guidance of William M. Butler (National Committeeman from Massachusetts), who will act as the President's personal representative," it was as good as if Coolidge had cast his derby into the circle. Never heretofore had the Coolidge method been so open. He still held to his belief that the office should seek the man, or at least appearances should be pronounced in that direction. But under the peculiar circumstances, with himself already in the office sought and with the necessity of making open declaration before the primaries in many states, a different policy was requisite.

At once Coolidge campaigners came into the open. Soon the Big Four of the White House

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campaign loomed up: Stearns; Butler; Slemph, the President's secretary; in the offing, James B. Reynolds, who managed the 1920 election campaign; and at various times more or less in the background, ex-Ambassador Harvey.

Soon thereafter experienced observers detected an experienced hand moving behind the scenes. Events which might first have been attributed to Coolidge "luck" happened so systematically as to be attributed to other factors. Behind the setting someone was taking infinite pains. In the police strike chapter we saw that when others were tempted to showy acts, thereby getting themselves into all sorts of briar patches "Br'er Rabbit kep' on say'n' nuthin.' "

In the pre-convention campaign Coolidge's method was similar. Gifford Pinchot is a natural born crusader and a natural born individualist. Unlike his brother Pennsylvanian, Senator George W. Pepper, he does not practice organization team play. Senator Pepper efficiently handled the coal situation in the previous year. It may have been just luck that Coolidge allowed Pinchot to thrust himself forward as the hero of the coal compromise in the autumn of 1923—and incidentally so alienate from himself the old guard that an instructed Pennsylvania delegation was impossible—or it may have been something else. Still Pinchot was a Republican candidate and in

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the progressive campaign a dangerous one. Coolidge's telegram to Pinchot thanking him for his "valuable co-operation" may have added to the latter's irritation and may have been partly responsible for Pinchot's prohibition attack against the administration. Of course, Secretary Mellon, also of Pennsylvania, happened to be head of the Federal Prohibition Service. Pinchot was still further alienated. Somehow the Pinchot boom faded from the horizon. That was certainly luck for Coolidge.

According to one writer<sup>1</sup>, when Pinchot was knee-deep in his "stupendous attack upon the Federal Government in the matter of prohibition enforcement, the ex-Governor of a Western State said to Mr. Coolidge:

'Is this sort of attack going to hurt you?'

'Never has,' said Mr. Coolidge succinctly.'

Meantime Frank C. Lowden was conveniently allowed to busy himself with un-ending conferences with wheat producers. Finally came the complete and sudden deflation of the Ford boom removing in a breath—what is more astounding by Ford's own breath—that single rival to whom straw votes had given the greatest preference. Two things were apparent: One that Ford's Presidential hopes were at one time high; another that he

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<sup>1</sup>See William Hard in the "Nation," January 2, 1924, for original development of this idea.

## THE START AS PRESIDENT

definitely quashed them on the day that he announced that the country was safe with Coolidge. It is possible that no action by or upon behalf of Coolidge lead to Ford's retirement. Some believed that it was a surprise to the quiet man in the White House. Others believed that the President's recommendations to Congress to dispose of Muscle Shoals to the Emperor of Detroit paved the way. Certainly they opened new fields for Ford's ambition. Hiram Johnson called it a "low-down" trade with Ford. The answer to such mud-flinging has already been advanced in these pages. It may have been sound policy for Coolidge but it was also considered sound policy for the country. Is honesty any the less honest because it is the best policy? Or in terms of the present argument—Does helping Ford to Muscle Shoals help the country any the less because it also helps Coolidge?

Not long thereafter the South Dakota primaries gave Coolidge a two-to-one vote over his chief Republican rival, Johnson.

### III.

With his message to Congress delivered, most important rivals deftly swept aside and the conservative wing of the party well knit behind, the Coolidge sky was cloudless.

As a group the Presidential backers were pre-

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pared to stand behind him so long as victory was on the horizon. In defeat they would melt away. But his real friends, notably men like Frank Stearns and that loyal and over-worked Secretary, Edward T. Clark, were ready to stand behind him come what might.

During these days the President added other friends and advisors.

Coolidge and Mellon became intimate, if that word can be used in the case of either man. And Senator Borah was one of those who frequently conferred with the Chief Executive. It was said, with what truth is not known, that Coolidge purposely gave ear to the Idaho Senator's advice because he had those dynamic qualities which Coolidge himself lacked.

### IV.

During the course of an administration it is dangerous to speak of accomplishments; during the first few months of Coolidge's leadership it is practically impossible, unless the statements are for ephemeral consumption. At the time of writing Coolidge's moves are in embryo stage. A Coolidge friend<sup>1</sup> wrote that "Before Coolidge left Amherst there had developed a general and well-

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<sup>1</sup>Charles A. Andrews, Waban, Mass.

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defined opinion that he was an unusual person whose ability would carry him far in some direction or other. But that . . . it was to lead through mayoralties, legislatures, governorships and to the Presidency never occurred to any of us I think," This gentleman added,—the quotation is from memory—"We recall qualities which should make an able and, if occasion presents, perhaps a great President."

So far this biographer has recorded traits of character and training and mental habits which (if combined with courage and physical stamina<sup>1</sup>), should make "an able and if occasion presents perhaps a great President." He had weathered the storms in comparatively sheltered arenas: Would he stand out in the great arena?

If the speech to Congress was the clear-cut statement of hopes and ambitions their consummation depended upon the legislative branch. Yet Coolidge took steps to back up his opinions. The portion of the message devoted to the farmer has been emphasized as requiring more boldness than any other.

At the request of the President, Eugene Meyer, Jr., Managing Director of the War Finance Corporation and F. W. Mondell, a director thereof,

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<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to recall that the great Presidents, Washington, Lincoln, Cleveland, Roosevelt, have been men of great physical stamina.



## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

had made in October an extended trip through the wheat-growing states of the Northwest. There were a series of talks and conferences in the leading agricultural centers. Both the Harding and Coolidge administrations had given through the agency of the War Finance Corporation, effective support to the development of the movement for co-operative marketing of farm products. This came to be called the Five Hundred Million Dollar Corporation. Since resuming operations in 1921 the War Finance Corporation authorized advances to co-operative marketing associations totaling \$202,500,000; and through banks and loan companies loans exceeding \$274,000,000 for agriculture and livestock purposes.\* To the movement for adjustment of wheat acreage by a diversification the President gave impetus by support of the Norbeck-Burtneess Bill. In his special message to Congress on January 23rd, the President urged adoption of legislation along these lines but insisted that the bills be so amended that the loans by the Government should accrue to the benefit of the farmer rather than to the benefit of their creditors. When the situation became more acute owing

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\*This and surrounding material were furnished upon request at the White House to know whether:

1. The administration had taken steps for agricultural relief as suggested in Coolidge's speeches to Congress, or whether,
2. Coolidge had stood on his expressed belief "that simple and direct methods put into operation *by the farmer himself* are the only real sources for restoration.

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to bank failures, the President sent Henry M. Dawes, Comptroller of the Currency, George R. James of the Federal Reserve Board and Mr. Meyer to confer with bankers in Chicago, Minneapolis and Sioux Falls, at which latter place a special agency of the War Finance Corporation was formed within 24 hours.

On February 4, 1924, there was held in Washington the "President's conference on Northwest-ern agriculture and finance," at which Mr. Hoover presided. Coolidge's opening address is of interest, because while suggesting general forms of relief such as the Norbeck-Burtneess Bill and an extension of time of credits by the War Finance Corporation, he insisted with greater firmness that the farmer must organize like other modern businesses, form co-operative associations, paddle his own canoe. Passages which give an insight to Coolidge's mental processes are worth quoting:

"In my message to the Congress I stated that there are distinct limits to the scope of the assistance which the federal government can render. These limits must not be overstepped. It was pointed out that government agencies cannot properly make loans upon insecure collateral, or to banking institutions whose capital is seriously impaired. There have been severe losses to banking and commercial interests on account of the serious conditions prevailing in the northwestern states. Some of these losses doubtless can be repaired,

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and further losses avoided, if the program of action herein outlined is adhered to. But we must take no action that will make it possible to transfer losses from private interests to the public treasury. *The object should be reconstruction, not charity, whether it is charity for the weak or for the strong.*

"I wish to repeat that these proposals are made to meet certain distressing situations in certain sections. They do not cover all the needs, but I believe they will be an effective help. Agriculture and banking, like all other interests, are not the business of the Government, but the business of the people. Primarily they must assume responsibility for them. The Government can help, should help, and will help; but it will be entirely ineffective unless the main impulse comes from the people.

"The principal purpose of this conference is to secure co-operation. Agriculture cannot stand alone. The banks cannot stand alone. A great amount of money has been spent to establish the population in the area affected. It represents some of the best elements of our citizenship. In this day of distress and adversity, it ought to be saved because it is worth saving. It can be saved if all of you who are interested are willing to do what you can do. *Without you the Government can do practically nothing. With you the Government can save the situation.*"

Administration efforts for farm relief have been more in the direction of spreading a sane attitude than in the nature of accomplishment; although accomplishments are noticable. The anti-League



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President Coolidge and his original cabinet on the White House lawn

Back row, left to right; Hoover, Work (interior), Wallace (Agriculture), Davis (Labor). Sitting, left to right: New (Postmaster General), Weeks, Hughes, The President, Mellon, and Daugherty and Denby, both resigned.



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but pro-World Court attitude in foreign matters was followed by the work of Brigadier General Charles G. Dawes and Owen D. Young on the Allied Commission to investigate Germany's power to pay. That should be set under the column of accomplishment.

In Mexico without recourse to high moral attitudes but with arm shipments, the United States stepped in on the side of President Obregon. This was done on the practical theory that the United States should assist the forces of Government and the side most likely to promote justice and order. Never before has a Mexican revolution been so well put down by the Government, thanks largely to United States help.

The administration naturally backed up General Wood's Philippine policy; and the country strongly encouraged by Coolidge, in a gust of generosity following the Tokyo earthquake, did more than a half-dozen Disarmament Conferences to warm the hearts of the Japanese. All the political war prisoners were unconditionally pardoned. Earlier in the year Coolidge had stated his conviction that the United States should interpose no objection to the return of the Hohenzollerns to Germany. To the delegation of the National Womens' Party agitating the 20th Amendment for equal rights, he made the direct statement that "If you want some change made now I haven't the slightest doubt that Congress will respond



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favorably." A member of the delegation told the writer that Coolidge gave them a more definite and favorable reaction than any President they had visited.

With his punctilious attention to legislative details the President appears to have been more than usually swamped during the early days of office. According to Professor Albert Bushnell Hart<sup>1</sup> he had previous to February, 1924, sent to the Senate more than 2,000 nominations to "Presidential offices."

With the amount of unofficial greetings and the necessity of expressing himself on scores of public occasions it was remarkable that he got his head above the clouds at all. When he did so it was primarily to study the 1925 budget and to back up its director, General Lord; to study the politics and the essence of the administration tax plan and to heartily support its proponent, Mr. Mellon. These economic and financial problems were nearest to Mr. Coolidge's heart. They expressed his convictions and his personality. They were, barring the great shadow which came later, the outstanding features of his first few months of admiration.

While he was preparing to press these financial measures, home rottenness was uncovered in the State of Denmark.

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<sup>1</sup>Current History Magazine.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ROTTENNESS IN DENMARK

HAD PRESIDENT Coolidge been of more robust nature, and had he been less than fourteen years in continuous office, he would have been better conditioned to meet the upheaval which arose with his Presidential career hardly under way. At the time of writing the country is knee-deep in oceans of oil. Land is hardly visible through murk and fog; apparently no one wants to reach the shore and no one has shown the sustained ability to lead a landing party. Many features of the disgraceful proceedings, both by attackers and attacked, exhibit America at her worst, and President Coolidge has not yet had opportunity to rise to his best. His service has chiefly been to keep a steady hand on the brakes—which, in the long run, may be best.

The major facts of the oil "Scandals" are reasonably known and well substantiated. The inferences are not always clear. Because modern

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warships are oil-burning President Wilson had set aside for the use of the American Navy Reserves Nos. 1 and 2 in California and the so-called Teapot Dome Reserve in Wyoming. During President Harding's administration and with the President's knowledge and approval, the title of these tracts was transferred by Edwin S. Denby, Secretary of the Navy, to the Department of the Interior, then headed by Albert Bacon Fall. Fall, without the usual form of public bids, leased the California reserves to one Edward L. Doheny and the Teapot Dome reserve in April, 1922, to Harry F. Sinclair. Mr. Fall was in straightened financial circumstances. *Four months before the California titles were made over to Doheny a black satchel containing \$100,000 in currency passed from Doheny's hands into those of Fall; and twelve months after the Wyoming titles were made over to Sinclair the latter transferred into Mr. Fall's pocket \$25,000 worth of Liberty Bonds!*

There were three major aspects in the oil graft disclosures: First, shocking graft and criminality in high places; second, damage to the Navy and to America in turning over huge oil reserves to private interests; and third, the political aspect with its resultant effect upon the character and fortunes of Coolidge. So far only the first aspect has been proven. We are primarily concerned with the third.

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No amount of argument about loans with or without collateral, no talk of favors and life-long friendships could hide the unadulterated facts that Fall received approximately \$125,000 from men to whom Government property was released. Whether the cold cash was received directly or indirectly, before or after the leases were made, and whether it did or did not influence the contracts, is of no consequence. That these men were friends made all the greater the necessity for what Wilson might have called "open contracts openly arrived at."

These oil reserve leases were long under investigation; obviously the policy of conservation had been violated; but there was no flaming of public opinion until the smell of graft was detected through the lies of some witnesses, and proven through the testimony of at least two.

That Harding's administration reversed the Wilson policy of oil conservation and that this was done without sufficient public debate is clear. The responsibility was undoubtedly Republican. But at the time of writing, belief to the contrary notwithstanding, *it has not been proved how far the sale of this particular property was detrimental to the Navy's interest.* There were technical questions involved. Oil was being drained from Naval Reserves. It might well be wise to sell and procure other reserves, or to procure the one out

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of every four barrels output allotted to the Navy by the terms of contract. "I would do it all over again," said Secretary Denby.

This point of view may yet be proved true. It was well enough had it not been for unadulterated bribery. Graft clouded every otherwise innocent statement, presumably vitiated otherwise legal contracts, and made it appear that Denby, undoubtedly honest himself, had been used as a catspaw.

The third phase—political—was the most shameful of all. The Battle of Mud was violent. One after another witnesses were brought in:—Archibald Roosevelt, a former employee of Sinclair; Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Navy; Edward B. McLean, publisher of the Washington Post and friend of Harding; Fall, Doheny and Sinclair testified and later revised their testimony; Doheny declared that the firm of William Gibbs McAdoo, leading candidate for Democratic nomination, had been paid \$100,000 to represent Doheny's companies; that he, Doheny, had similarly retained the late Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior under Wilson, etc. On the stand McAdoo explained his connection as having to do exclusively with Doheny's Mexican interests. But his candidacy was affected. Attorney General Daugherty was naturally a leading subject for attack. For weeks

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the papers had him resigning within forty-eight hours. William J. Burns of the Department of Justice was brought in. Practically all the leading employees of McLean testified at sometime or other; Frank Vanderlip overcame his modesty long enough to proclaim that the late President Harding's "Marion Star" had been sold under curious circumstances, or that there were rumors to that effect which he hoped thus to explode; and finally President Coolidge was made the subject of attack by innuendo if not directly. Our political systems, our mental attitudes, at times a portion of the press were shown in their worst aspects. From the outset it was obvious that the morality of Teapot Dome—the barefaced bribery of an administration officer for private gain—was a side issue. The entire energies of the "outs" were devoted to destroying the "ins" (in understandable revenge for the tar and feathering given to Wilson in 1920); Republicans fought back to involve Democrats. That political and party considerations were uppermost, and that the whole Democratic scheme was to punish the Harding-Coolidge administration is patent from the fact that the only real Cabinet offender, Albert B. Fall of Three Rivers, New Mexico, being out of the administration, was allowed to go Scot free. Such at least was the situation in the early spring of 1924. So anxious were Democratic senators to pin the blame



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on the entire G. O. P. organization that the real culprit was not even prosecuted!

### II.

Now, if ever, the country longed for a leader in the wilderness. At first people suffered from shock and apprehension. Later they suffered from disgust. In Washington the atmosphere resembled a murdered man's funeral where the murderer might be among the mourners. Each was suspicious of his neighbor. The country had no doubt of Coolidge's morality and integrity, but it was generally skeptical about others in high places. It wanted someone to separate the sheep from the goats, to punish the guilty, to put an end to the indiscriminate Battle of Mud. It wanted someone to restore its self-respect. Coolidge acted with characteristic—to some it seemed with painful—deliberation. He refused to be rushed. He refused to be stampeded into unconstitutional measures. While partaking of the country's indignation he looked for an ultimate reaction of public sentiment from hysterical heights.

The President's difficulties were manifold. Not the least was the fact that he had not yet been elected President, not even nominated under his own colors, that he had come in under a dead man's mantle, had not appointed his own

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cabinet, could not make a drastic move. His sense of fitness and party loyalty no less than his own temperament precluded half-cock action. His sense of public duty prevented taking a partisan view. Yet politically he was responsible for men whom personally he would never have appointed. And party-minded senators continually counseled him to do this and that in view of primaries, party elections, and possible third parties. In view of the disclosures of the previous two days, the President said in his "midnight" statement of January 26th:

"It is not for the President to determine criminal guilt or render judgment in civil causes. That is the function of the courts. It is not for him to prejudge. I shall do neither; but when facts are revealed to me that require action for the purpose of insuring the enforcement of either civil or criminal liability, such action will be taken. That is the province of the Executive. . . .

"Counsel will be instructed to prosecute these cases in the courts, so that if there is any guilt it will be punished; if there is any civil liability, it will be enforced; if there is any fraud, it will be revealed; and if there are any contracts which are illegal, they will be canceled. Every law will be enforced and every right of the people and the Government will be protected." (See Appendix "A").

On February 11th the Senate passed a resolution

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requesting the President to oust Secretary Denby from the Cabinet.

Within four hours the President's answer was published. By the next morning it had reached every newspaper in the country. It could not have been improved upon. Reaction was instantaneous, thoroughly favorable.

"As soon as special counsel can advise as to the legality of these leases and assemble for me the pertinent facts. . . . I shall take such action as seems essential for the full protection of the public interests. The dismissal of an officer of the Government . . . other than by impeachment, is exclusively an executive function." . . . The President annexed the opinions and actions of Cleveland and Madison.

*"I do not propose to sacrifice any innocent man for my own welfare nor do I propose to maintain in office any unfit man for my own welfare . . ."*

Here was the home run the country wanted. The better sections of the grandstand cheered. Echoes could be heard from the bleachers. On the following afternoon Coolidge followed it by a similar hit in his Lincoln Day address in New York. But at this point it seemed to the President's critics that something got into the batter's legs. Before he reached first base his gait slackened—due probably to bad coaching—and the hit rolled foul and died. He had to try again.

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Before the week was up, without opportunity for investigation, without time for special counsel to report the intrinsic legality of the leases, Coolidge had acquiesced in Denby's resignation—at the latter's request. On the surface this appeared like a reversal. On the one hand, it did not look like a case of righteous and wrathful house-cleaning. Nor on the other hand, did Coolidge appear to stand by his own ultimatum that the courts must decide, that the accused must have an opportunity for rebuttal, and that he (Coolidge) refused to be moved by public or party clamor. But it is also proper to say that the criticisms were entirely *inferential*.

The case of Daugherty was harder to decide; he was a fighter, he was Harding's friend—one might almost say Harding's *sine que non*—and if he were thrown to the sharks there must be further victims. Against this was the fact that neither Daugherty's legal standing nor political past had ever qualified him for a cabinet office. And the country knew it. Sooner or later he must go.

In answer to the above objections it is to be noted that the public interest might suffer through retaining Denby in the face of impeachment proceedings. They would drag out for weeks, probably months. Legislation would suffer through more Congressional side shows. Important bills

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would remain in Committee. For that reason Coolidge did not feel justified in holding Denby to stay against his will.

Another important factor in connection with Denby's removal was pointed out by a spokesman for the President. On February 8th the President had approved Senate Joint Resolution No. 54, appointing special counsel to investigate the leases. Although at the time he expressed no opinion with reference to the facts in the preambles, and although he reiterated that it was for the Courts to determine the legal effect of the "circumstances incident to the execution of the leases and contracts"—yet in so doing he officially approved the investigation of Secretary Denby. Pending the result, the propriety of retaining Denby was doubtful.

The point, however, was too intricate\* to interest the public.

But the criticisms, it is repeated, were based on surface indications. Factors available to no one but Coolidge, factors which he could not divulge, may exist, will undoubtedly come to light. None but the President knew all the conflicting problems. If it ultimately appears that Coolidge erred,

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\*So too, in the dismissal of Daugherty, word of which comes as proofs are read. The last straw seized upon by Coolidge was of a legal nature that gave Daugherty a chance to play the martyr.

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there is an analogy common to all Presidents. No one of them has been *uniformly* right.

With the exception of Denby's retirement, (in which the present questions relate to the time and manner of the act, rather than the act itself), and a slight flurry during the early days of the oil Scandals—the President, in the face of distressing circumstances, kept both feet on the ground. On that fact impartial students agreed. As usual they found him cautious, playing true to himself. While others were infected by the epidemic, Coolidge waited quietly for an opening. There were many indications that he had gained strength throughout the country.

From those in a position to know came more or less trustworthy reports that Coolidge's plans were definitely laid; that he was waiting for the zero hour. There came one statement from close to the President that he planned a gradual removal of four members of the Cabinet; another statement that only four members were to remain. At what time he would act, whether it would be in case of, or before, or after his nomination or election, was not indicated.

Even those who found fault that Coolidge did not do something more "definite" and dramatic, that he did not "take the bull by the horns" and make himself the hero, found comfort in one fact. The United States had rarely found a President



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whose personal integrity was so patent, whose manner of living and personal fortunes smacked less of stocks and bonds.

Volumes could be devoted to the subject. They would not be devoted to Republican or Democratic corruption as such, but to many aspects of our national psychology and to our sleeping conscience, which has long permitted in public office acts that border on corruption. For all its sensations Teapot Dome was but one of the symptoms of disease.

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Such, in barest outline, was the situation as these notes are brought to a close. That Coolidge would restore the country's self respect by stating and adhering to fundamental issues regardless of inheritances, party obligations and the 1924 campaign, was the hope and strong belief of his admirers. Cleveland had done so. At the end of the first term he went down on a big issue to glorious—but not permanent—defeat.

It is particularly difficult to speak of Coolidge's actions because the evidence is not yet in. Nor is the verdict. The President's position was as Judge of conflicting testimony. He could not appropriately pass sentence until all the testimony had been thrashed out. No one—actually no living person—knew what was in his mind; what later action he planned. But judging from our knowledge of his past it was necessary to assume



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A recent photograph of Mrs. Coolidge, Calvin Jr., and John



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that in his own way and time he would once more nail the flag to the mast and, regardless of result, would prove himself a captain.

Meantime Coolidge studied the skyline and waited for a rift in the fog.

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Before surrendering Coolidge to the future, let us get another close-up of the man. His habits have not changed, though they have fitted into new surroundings. He was the same as ever "only more so," as the little girl from Vermont put it. Owing to long practice he excelled in executive dispatch in handling the details of office. One constantly wondered at seeing so slight a body confronted by so great problems. The mere size of the White House, its vistas and its gardens seemed to emphasize the slimness of its occupant. He worked harder than ever, which meant incessantly. He was in every play.<sup>1</sup> If not in it, behind it, protected by the interference, till, as in the Boston strike, he saw a capital opening. He was slow to make up his mind. There is evidence that if he allowed himself to be hurried, he made it up wrong. His relaxations were negligible. If his enthusiasms were not violent, neither was his play. It consisted in stopping work. In that sense he was the antithesis of Theodore Roosevelt. Lincoln

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<sup>1</sup>Clinton Gilbert, "Philadelphia Public Ledger," compared him to an All-America quarterback.

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reveled in telling funny stories, reading Artemus Ward aloud; Cleveland went fishing; Roosevelt subdued the earth and all the animals thereon; Wilson motored, listened to music, and watched the vaudeville; Harding had his friends and his golf. In the case of Coolidge, it is hard to complete the analogy. Washburn's statement that Coolidge knew but two sensations: work and recuperation for more work, is pretty close to the truth. Toward the end of the morning conferences—say, along noon of a non-Cabinet day—a friend might slip into the Executive Offices to find a somewhat huddled figure behind a light brown cigar, leaning back in the revolving chair behind the huge polished desk and gazing toward the Potomac.

"Come in," he would say to Slemph. "No, not at all, just waiting for Chief Justice Taft." And the supposedly harnessed tongue might exercise quite genially.

In relaxations as in other matters, he was still peculiar. At the beginning of his White House days, Coolidge took early morning walks through Potomac Park; but, as might have been expected, all those with an axe to grind were overcome with an ambition for morning strolls in the same neighborhood. Later on he took to walking the streets on window-gazing tours—like Rebecca on her night off. This was preferably at the evening

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hour when greatness is disguised by dusk. At such times the inconspicuous figure slipped out of the White House, perhaps followed by Jervis or E. W. Starling of the Secret Service staff. The President, unnoticed by passersby, might stare at a fruit stand, mentally cataloging the different kinds of fruit displayed, what was sold, and what was eaten; or he would gaze, to use his own phrase, at "women's fixin's,"<sup>1</sup> in the show window. Again he might stroll through the downtown streets, Ninth Street, Seventh Street, between E and F, Washington's nearest approach to a Bowery—where he might gaze in ruminative satisfaction at the cheaper movie billboards of "Bill the Daredevil" rescuing "Nervy Nell." Refreshed by such debauches, he would turn back, slowly retracing his footsteps toward the House of Rulers.

Let us leave him, in the midst of his troubles, on a drizzling March evening, staring at the downtown shop windows:—a dry, wry, shrewd, hard-working little man, wiry but not robust, uninspiring to the eye, but dignified in action; listening freely for advice, with an extraordinary gift for condensing public sentiment when he detects it; a man who would make more of a fighting impression were he cock-surer of his convictions and his

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<sup>1</sup>"Tha-at man costs me lots of money," Coolidge remarked to French Strother, accompanying him on a walk. Silence. A block later Coolidge added, "Sells women's fixin's." Coolidge takes a great interest in Mrs. Coolidge's wardrobe.



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physique; an honest, patient student with a large and philosophic view of the public good, doing his level best for the party and the country; a clean cut, down-East Yankee; a most "inscrutable little devil," in short, to many who have tried to study him, rather lonesome, rather lovable, and, so far, quite unsolved.

THE END

## Appendix A<sup>\*</sup>

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[ADDITIONAL SPEECHES AND PROCLAMATIONS BY  
COOLIDGE NOT COVERED IN THE TEXT.]

### ON REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

"We live under a republican form of government. We need forever to remember that representative government does represent. A careless, indifferent representative is the result of a careless, indifferent electorate. The people who start to elect a man to get what he can for his district will probably find they have elected a man who will get what he can for himself."

### EDUCATION

[EXCERPT FROM SPEECH AT AMHERST COLLEGE  
COMMENCEMENT JUNE 18, 1919]

"Civilization depends not only upon the knowledge of the people, but upon the use they make of it. If knowledge be wrongfully used, civilization commits

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\*The version of some speeches in Appendix A is from "The Price of Freedom" by Calvin Coolidge, (Charles Scribner's Sons.)

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suicide. Broadly speaking, the college is not to educate the individual, but to educate society. The individual may be ignorant and vicious. If society have learning and virtue, that will sustain him. If society lacks learning and virtue, it perishes. Education must give not only power but direction. It must minister to the whole man or it fails."

## ESSAY ON CAUSES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

*(Coolidge, during his senior year at Amherst College (1895) won the \$150 gold medal, offered by The Sons of the American Revolution, for the best essay on the causes of the American Revolution. The contest was open to seniors of all American colleges and universities. Here is the winning essay.)*

When history looks beyond the immediate cause of the American Revolution for the justifying principles, it is very soon brought back to the spirit of English liberty. It is the same genius for freedom that has led the race from the primeval forests of Germany to the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution.

Such an honorable antiquity of political ideas has made the race very conservative of self-government. The idea is prehistoric. It is the descendants of those very freemen described by Tacitus, who not only dictated the policy of Edward the Confessor but extorted the great charter of human rights from King John in the thirteenth century.

And during the next four hundred years, too, this spirit was not dormant, but came to the surface on three great occasions—the confirmation of the Magna Charta by Edward I, the Petition of Rights to Charles

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I, and the Revolution that drove James II from his throne.

Although it is characteristic of Englishmen to have great love for a king so long as he respects the liberties of the people, yet the fact that they drove out one king, rebelled against two and executed three, shows clearly enough that there was always a strong idea of the divine right of the people as well as of kings.

Precedents, then, are by no means wanting among Englishmen for the successful resistance of arbitrary despotism whenever it encroached upon their liberties.

Another fact that must be noted is the character of the colonists, and especially those of Massachusetts. These were the Puritans, who had fought the wars of liberty in England. Then, because they were not satisfied with church ordinances, they were driven by Archbishop Laud to seek religious freedom across the sea.

Of all the race they were the most tenacious of their rights and the most jealous of their liberties. The American Revolution was not, then, any struggle for emancipation from slavery; and the colonists were free men. Nor was it at first so much for gaining new liberties as for preserving the old.

Nor can it, as is often thought, be called a war between different nations. Both sides were Englishmen who gloried in the name of England. William and Mary had, moreover, given the colonists a full share of the rights of British subjects. Another fact showing the same thing is that almost the ablest advocates of the colonial cause were members of the British House of Parliament, while the most ardent adherents of the King were colonists.

The real object of resistance was to gain security from Parliamentary encroachments. This was the chief cause for which the Revolutionists contended,

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but by no means all they obtained. The war was finally fought out on principles as far-reaching as the history of nations. It was a struggle for the retention of those great institutions that check oppression and violence.

The colonists were contending for the principle of a representative government of chartered rights and constitutional liberties. They were defending themselves against the military despotism of George III and struggling to change the foundation of government from force to equality.

The defense of the principles set forth above involves scarcely anything more than a narration of the leading events that culminated in the Declaration of Independence. It has been said that the separation of America from the mother country was the logical outcome of the French and Indian War. However this may be, it is quite certain that the condition of England at the close of this war forced a new colonial policy that would not have been thought of before 1763, and could not be executed until after that date.

For, instead of wanting new taxes and new restrictions upon their commerce, the colonists were already breaking away from the old restrictions by their systematic evasions of the navigation acts. These laws of trade were merely commercial regulations and not at all for revenue. But because the colonists were no longer trading-stations in their relations to the central government, they resisted even these restrictions.

Instead, however, of noting these tendencies, Grenville made a leading part of his scheme of government the passage of laws for raising revenue in America. He proposed to enforce the trade laws, which meant that the interests of a few merchants in England were to be considered before the welfare of the King's subjects in America; he proposed to quarter soldiers here,

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nominally for the purpose of defending the colonies, which meant force and a military despotism; he proposed to raise a tax on the authority of the English Parliament, which meant the disfranchisement of three million British subjects, and the surrender of all those rights laid down in the Magna Charta.

The means Grenville adopted for the raising of this tax was the notorious Stamp Act. This, however, met with so much disapproval that it was soon repealed, but at the same time Parliament passed the Dependency Act, which declared that the repeal did not include the principle involved. This was followed by Townsend's Revenue Act, laying duties on imports. Again the colonies protested and the ministry attempted coercion.

This measure was too expensive, so once more all revenue taxes were repealed, except the one on tea, which was left to maintain the principle. During an interval of some four years that followed, from 1770 to 1774, there were several acts of violence on the part of the colonies in their resistance to these imports, including the Boston Massacre, the burning of the *Gaspee*, and the Boston Tea Party.

Again Great Britain had recourse to acts of coercion.

First, it closed the port of Boston, thus destroying the property of thousands.

Second, it declared void certain parts of the charter of Massachusetts, following a policy begun in New York in 1767, and so it virtually attempted to annihilate the protection of chartered rights and chartered liberties that has always been so dear to Englishmen. Free government was destroyed, too, in another way. Judges courts, sheriffs were made almost the puppets of the King. They were placed in his direct pay and made subject to his pleasure. Town meetings were forbidden, and thus the old familiar forms of self-gov-



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ernment were entirely swept away. The governor was made as absolute as a despot, and the form of government that was thus thrust upon Massachusetts was despotism such as no Englishmen would have endured even in the days of Henry VIII.

Third, the British Government sent nearly all criminals to England for trial.

Fourth, soldiers were quartered upon the inhabitants, so that a military government was set up in the colonies.

The governor stood over them like a viceroy. In his command was the army. If a soldier should murder a citizen, he was sent to England for trial. If a citizen should become a criminal, he, too, might be sent across the sea, in order that in both cases the government might have the advantage. It was a military despotism. There were no popular meetings, no criminal courts, no habeas corpus, no freedom of the press. The question was no longer one of taxes; that was a mere figment now.

Though the injustice of taxation without representation made a good war-cry, it is, in the last analysis, a dangerous principle. But it is easy to grasp, and the common people no doubt fought the war largely on that issue. The fact is, it is a duty to the state to pay taxes, and it is equally a duty to vote. It does not follow that because the state requires one duty it shall require the second.

But there is another side where the requirement of the state runs over into tyranny. Only on this ground can resistance to taxation be justified. So long as the colonies were a part of the state of Great Britain—and they were so by their charters and by the action of William and Mary—that state had the right to demand not only their property, but their service in the army, and, in the last extremity, their lives. It can-

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not be, then, that the American Revolution was fought that colonists might escape paying taxes. The great struggle that they passed through must make such a duty seem insignificant. The real principle was not one of the right of the state or the duty of citizens; it was a question of government, a question of form and method.

It is this that is meant above, in the statement that the struggle was not between nations, or for new principles. It was not so much a revolution, a propagation of new ideas, as the maintenance of the old forms of representative government, of chartered rights and constitutional liberty. England had fought for this in 1688 and imagined it was secured. But it was so only in name.

George III was by nature a despot; at heart he was another Stuart. He had the Parliament almost completely under his control in its legislation upon English questions, but in regard to the King's colonies his will was supreme.

He forced a policy of government upon America that he could not, and dared not, force upon England, though his disposition was strong enough. Were the descendants of Cromwell's Puritans going back to submit to a Stuart régime?

That is what is meant when we hear that America fought at once the battle of freedom in the colonies and in England. That is what England's great statesman meant when he declared on the floor of Parliament that he rejoiced in the resistance of the colonists. The Earl of Chatham knew that the government of George III, in whose ears was ringing the admonition of his mother "to be King," was undermining the constitution of Great Britain and bringing the state back to the form of monarchy that had existed in the time of the Stuarts and the Tudors.

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But if the leading principle was the preservation of the English constitutional government from the encroachments of King and Parliament, there is another principle, as far-reaching as the development of the state in government. Sovereignty is always finally vested in the people.

It may need a theocracy to lead a people out of barbarism; this may develop into a despotism with the power divided between kings and bishops but a struggle is sure to come, and the people will gather about the King to make him a monarch, like Louis XIV, who really was an objective realization of the state. This, too, will be but temporary; the people will realize more and more that the sovereignty is with them and will finally assert it.

England had asserted it against the Stuarts, but George the Third forgot it, and it took the loss of the colonies by the Revolution to remind him of it.

If the King could have accommodated himself to the existing state of affairs for America as he managed to do for England, there would have been the limited constitutional monarchy that Great Britain finally reached in 1832. But this was impossible, and so the colonies were driven to assert by war what the Commons of England partly gained by legislation sixty years later.

There was further gained in the United States a recognition that quality, not quantity, is the basis of the peerage of man, and accordingly all men were declared free and equal.

Still, there is another factor that must have eventually led to separation. The great land of America had a part to play in the history of the world that could best be performed by making it an independent nation.

England's great work was to plant colonies; America could not aid in that work. It was her place to

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found a great nation on this side of the Atlantic and bring out the conception of free government.

And when this was done, then America stretched out her hand over the sea to aid the oppressed of Europe, to furnish them a place of refuge, and, as soon as they could assume the duties, make them citizens not alone of our United States but of the world.

### EXCERPTS FROM

### THE GROVE ORATION — AMHERST COL- LEGE — BY J. CALVIN COOLIDGE — CLASS OF 1895

“The mantle of truth falls upon the Grove Orator on condition he wear it wrong side out. For the Grove Oration is intended to give a glimpse of the only true side of college life—the inside. And how can this be displayed except by turning things wrong side out? That is the grove prerogative. We came out of doors to have plenty of room. Reconstructed Amherst has not yet decreed that ‘fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly.’ Yet let no one expect that this is an occasion for feeding the multitude—on small fishes. I only bring the impressions that we gather by the way, whether they be pleasant as the breath of society roses from over the meadows of Old Hadley, or disagreeable as the ancient odors that filled Athenae Hall.

“Now college life has three relations—the relation to the class, the relation to the faculty, and the relation to other things. The class relation begins with a cane rush where the undergraduates use Anglo-Saxon, and ends with a diploma where the faculty use Latin—if it does not end before by a communication

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from the President in just plain English. When we had our first rush the streets of Amherst were lit with matches. We lost the rush, but we found our class spirit. . .

"There is connected with our Christian College an institution of most honorable antiquity called a faculty. Some of its members, like comets with long hair, move in orbits of enormous eccentricity. Some seem but satellites revolving around that tenebrific star that did ray out darkness over the Amherst System. . .

"GENTLEMEN OF THE CLASS OF '95: Oh! you need not look alarmed. I am not going to work off any song and dance about the cold, cruel world. It may not be such a misfortune to be out of college. It is not positive proof that a diploma is a wolf because it comes to you in sheep's clothing. No one in business will have to pay Professor Tyler, him of the nest-egg pate, two dollars for an extra examination. Of course we are not all stars. Post, like the man in the moon, seems to have come too soon to find his way to knowledge. Compton has sometimes been unfortunate—when he could not read between the lines. And there is Charlie Little in his own speciality of drawing himself into his shell like a turtle to exist solely to and for self. In looking over the class book, I see that the statistics committee made the mistake of not taking the opinion of the class to see, whether, from present indications, Fiske's failure to make the commencement stage was due more to subjective causes than to objective obstacles. But we have also such men as Colby, who at Chicago, sacrificed the brightest athletic prospects of any man in the class for the sake of Amherst, and every man in college knows what reward he had for his loyalty. Wherever we go, whatever we are, scientific or classical, conditioned or unconditioned, degreed or disagreed, we are going to be



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Amherst men. And whoever sees a purple and white button marked with '95 shall see the emblem of a class spirit that will say, 'Old Amherst, doubtless always right, but right or wrong, Old Amherst!'

### AMERICA'S AFTER WAR POLICY

[FROM SPEECH BEFORE THE SOMMERVILLE REPUBLICAN CITY COMMITTEE—AUGUST 7, 1918]

“. . . But America must furnish more than armies and navies for the future. If armies and navies were to be supreme, Germany would be right. There are other and greater forces in the world than march to the roll of the drum. As we are turning the scale with our sword now, so hereafter we must turn the scale with the moral power of America. It must be our disinterested plans that are to restore Europe to a place through justice when we have secured victory through the sword. And into a new world we are to take not only the people of oppressed Europe but the people of America. Out of our sacrifice and suffering, out of our blood and tears, America shall have a new awakening, a rededication to the cause of Washington and Lincoln, a firmer conviction for the right.”

### PART OF INAUGURAL ADDRESS AS GOVERNOR JANUARY 2, 1919

“Members of the General Court of Massachusetts:

“You are coming to a new legislative session under the inspiration of the greatest achievements in all history. You are beholding the fulfilment of the age-



# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

old promise, man coming into his own. You are to have the opportunity and responsibility of reflecting this new spirit in the laws of the most enlightened of Commonwealths. We must steadily advance. Each individual must have the rewards and opportunities worthy of the character of our citizenship, a broader recognition of his worth and a larger liberty, protected by order—and always under the law. In the promotion of human welfare Massachusetts happily may not need much reconstruction, but, like all living organizations, forever needs continuing construction. What are the lessons of the past? How shall they be applied to these days of readjustment? How shall we emerge from the autocratic methods of war to the democratic methods of peace, raising ourselves again to the source of all our strength and all our glory—sound self-government?

“It is your duty not only to reflect public opinion, but to lead it. Whether we are to enter a new era in Massachusetts depends upon you. The lessons of the war are plain. Can we carry them on into peace? Can we still act on the principle that there is no sacrifice too great to maintain the right? Shall we continue to advocate and practise thrift and industry? Shall we require unswerving loyalty to our country? These are the foundations of all greatness.

“Let there be a purpose in all your legislation to recognize the right of man to be well born, well nurtured, well educated, well employed, and well paid. This is no gospel of ease and selfishness, or class distinction, but a gospel of effort and service, of universal application.

“Such results cannot be secured at once, but they should be ever before us. The world has assumed burdens that will bear heavily on all peoples. We shall not escape our share. But whatever may be our

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trials, however difficult our tasks, they are only the problems of peace, and a victorious peace. The war is over. Whatever the call of duty now we should remember with gratitude that it is nothing compared with the heavy sacrifice so lately made. The genius and fortitude which conquered then cannot now fail."

### THE PILGRIMS

AT THE EXERCISES ON THE THREE HUNDREDTH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDING OF THE  
PILGRIMS, AT PLYMOUTH, MASSACHU-  
SETTS, DECEMBER 21, 1920

"Three centuries ago to day the Pilgrims of the *Mayflower* made final landing at Plymouth Rock. They came not merely from the shores of the Old World. It will be in vain to search among recorded maps and history for their origin. They sailed up out of the infinite.

"There was among them small trace of the vanities of life. They came undecked with orders of nobility. They were not children of fortune but of tribulation. Persecution, not preference, brought them hither; but it was a persecution in which they found a stern satisfaction. They cared little for titles; still less for the goods of this earth; but for an idea they would die. Measured by the standards of men of their time, they were the humble of the earth. Measured by later accomplishments, they were the mighty. In appearance weak and persecuted they came—rejected, despised—an insignificant band; in reality strong and independent, a mighty host of whom the world was not worthy, destined to free mankind. No captain ever led his forces to such a conquest. Oblivious to

rank, yet men trace to them their lineage as to a royal house.

"Forces not ruled by man laid their unwilling course. As they landed, a sentinel of Providence, humbler, nearer to nature than themselves, welcomed them in their own tongue. They came seeking only an abiding-place on earth, "but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country," says Governor Bradford, "where God hath prepared for them a city." On that abiding faith has been reared an empire, magnificent beyond their dreams of Paradise.

"Amid the solitude they set up hearthstone and altar; the home and the church. With arms in their hands they wrung from the soil their bread. With arms they gathered in the congregation to worship Almighty God. But they were armed, that in peace they might seek divine guidance in righteousness; not that they might prevail by force, but that they might do right though they perished.

"What an increase, material and spiritual, three hundred years has brought that little company is known to all the earth. No like body ever cast so great an influence on human history. Civilization has made of their landing-place a shrine. Unto the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been intrusted the keeping of that shrine. To her has come the precious heritage. It will be kept as it was created, or it will perish, not with an earthly pride but with a heavenly vision.

"Plymouth Rock does not mark a beginning or an end. It marks a revelation of that which is without beginning and without end—a purpose, shining through eternity with a resplendent light, undimmed even by the imperfections of men; and a response, an answering purpose, from those who, oblivious, disdainful of all else, sailed hither seeking only for an avenue for the immortal soul."

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## THEODORE ROOSEVELT

ADDRESS BEFORE THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL  
ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK CITY,  
JANUARY 23, 1921

"Great men are the ambassadors of providence sent to reveal to their fellow men their unknown selves. To them is granted the power to call forth the best there is in those who come under their influence. Sometimes they come as great captains, commanders of men, who have hewed out empires, sometimes as statesmen, ministering to the well-being of their country, sometimes as painters and poets, showing new realms of beauty, sometimes as philosophers and preachers, revealing to the race "the way, the truth, and the life," but always as inspirers of noble action, translating high ideals into the practical affairs of life. There is something about them better than anything they do or say. If measured at all, they are to be measured in the responsive action of what others do or say. They come and go, in part a mystery, in part the simplest of all experience, the compelling influence of the truth. They leave no successor. The heritage of greatness descends to the people.

"No man was ever meanly born. About his cradle is the wondrous miracle of life. He may descend into the depths, he may live in infamy and perish miserably, but he is born great. Men build monuments above the graves of their heroes to mark the end of a great life, but women seek out the birthplace and build their shrine, not where a great life had its ending but where it had its beginning, seeking with a truer instinct the common source of things not in that which is gone forever but in that which they know will again be manifest. Life may depart, but the source of life is constant.

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

"For the purpose of ministering and giving expression to this sentiment, your association has been formed, formed in the memory of one of America's great men, yet not solely for perpetuating the memory, but for extending the services to the people he loved, of Theodore Roosevelt. . .

"When the country recovered from the devastation of the war it entered an era of great industrial expansion. Many thousands of miles of railroads were laid, minerals were mined in great profusion, manufacturing plants increased enormously; there was a great influx of population causing the building of teeming cities, all of which led to a fabulous increase of wealth. It was distinctly a commercial age marked by a consuming desire for financial success. Along with this, however, went that spread of culture which wealth brings. Colleges were endowed, public libraries were built, hospitals were provided, science and the arts were supported and advanced. All this was done by the power of wealth as a result of business success. . .

"The man who finally brought the business men of the nation to see that their course was economically unsound, and therefore to be abandoned, and who roused the American people to the assertion again of their right to control their government for the public welfare, was Theodore Roosevelt. No man had done so much to destroy an unsound economic theory, and to restore his country to its true form of representative government since the days of Abraham Lincoln. And as with Lincoln, no one, whether formerly victor or vanquished, would return to the old order. He broke the menace of monopoly. He made the sovereignty of the people again supreme.

". . . In a struggle of that nature not all good men or all patriots are on one side. Had it been so there would be no struggle. Nor is it alone the guilty who



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suffer. There were many Americans who, conscious of their own rectitude, assumed the rectitude of others and therefore disapproved of the Roosevelt policies. They were using their power unselfishly for the public welfare. But there were others who were not. Men said in derision that Roosevelt had discovered the Ten Commandments. What they said derisively let us state seriously. He had discovered the Ten Commandments, and he applied their doctrine with great vigor in places that had assumed they had the power to discard the Ten Commandments."

### LAW AND ORDER

IN ACCEPTING THE GOLD MEDAL AWARDED BY THE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
FOR HIS ACTION IN CONNECTION WITH  
THE POLICE STRIKE IN BOSTON,  
NEW YORK, JANUARY 23, 1921

"It is a very great honor that you have bestowed upon me by awarding me this medal. I shall hold it in part as a trustee. If it had not been for the clear insight and the determination of Edwin U. Curtis, a former mayor and then police commissioner of the city of Boston, the question that came to me would never have come. It was because he decided that question right in the first instance that I had the opportunity of supporting him in the second instance. And it was due not only to Commissioner Curtis, but it was due to the united efforts of the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It was due to her public press, to her patriotic citizens, who at once raised a half million dollars, and to her citizenship all up and down the Commonwealth that united, with-



# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

out party distinction, in making that victory supreme at the polls.

"It is no accident that the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts believe in law and order. It is their heritage. When the Pilgrim Fathers landed there in 1620 they brought ashore with them the *Mayflower* compact which they had drawn up in the cabin of that little bark under the witness of the Almighty, in which they pledged themselves, one to another, to make just and equitable laws, and not only to make them, but, when they were made, to abide by them.

"So that, for three hundred years, that has been the policy and the principle of that Commonwealth. And I shall hold this medal as a testimony to the service that was begun three hundred years ago and has continued through these generations; and in the hope that its example may still continue as a beacon light to all civilization."

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS AS VICE PRESIDENT MARCH 4, 1921

"Five generations ago there was revealed to the people of this nation a new relationship between man and man, which they declared and proclaimed in the American Constitution. Therein they recognized a legislature empowered to express the will of the people in law, a judiciary required to determine and state such law, and an executive charged with securing obedience to the law, all holding their office, not by reason of some superior force, but through the duly determined conscience of their countrymen.

"To the House, close to the heart of the nation, renewing its whole membership by frequent elections, representing directly the people, reflecting their com-

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mon purpose, has been granted a full measure of the power of legislation and exclusive authority to originate taxation. To the Senate, renewing its membership by degrees, representing in part the sovereign States, has been granted not only a full measure of the power of legislation, but, if possible, far more important functions.

"To it is intrusted the duty of review, that to negotiations there may be added ratification, and to appointment approval. But its greatest function of all, too little mentioned and too little understood, whether exercised in legislating or reviewing, is the preservation of liberty. Not merely the rights of the majority, they little need protection, but the rights of the minority, from whatever source they may be assailed. The great object for us to seek here, for the Constitution identifies the vice presidency with the Senate, is to continue to make this chamber, as it was intended by the fathers, the citadel of liberty. An enormous power is here conferred, capable of much good or ill, open, it may be, to abuse, but necessary, wholly and absolutely necessary, to secure the required result.

"Whatever its faults, whatever its human imperfections, there is no legislative body in all history that has used its powers with more wisdom and discretion, more uniformly for the execution of the public will, or more in harmony with the spirit of the authority of the people which has created it, than the United States Senate. I take up the duties the people have assigned me under the Constitution, which we can neither enlarge nor diminish, of presiding over this Senate, agreeably to its rules and regulations, deeply conscious that it will continue to function in harmony with its high traditions as a great deliberative body, without passion and without fear, unmoved by clamor, but most sensitive to the right, the stronghold of govern-

# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

ment according to law, that the vision of past generations may be more and more the reality of generations yet to come.

FROM SPEECH AT TREMONT TEMPLE,  
BOSTON—NOVEMBER 1, 1919

[JUST *before* RE-ELECTION AND AFTER  
POLICE STRIKE]

"When this campaign is over it will be a rash man who will again attempt to further his selfish interests by dragging a great party name in the mire and seeking to gain the honor of office by trafficking with disorder.<sup>1</sup> The conduct of public affairs is not a game. Responsible office does not go to the crafty. Governments are not founded upon an association for public plunder but on the co-operation of men wherein each is seeking to do his duty.

"The past five years have been like an earthquake. They have shaken the institutions of men to their very foundations. It has been a time of searchings and questionings. It has been a time of great awakening, there has been an overpowering resolution among men to make things better. Despotisms have been falling. Republics have been rising. There has been rebellion everywhere against usurped authority. With all that America has been entirely sympathetic. There has been bred in the blood through generations a great sympathy for all peoples struggling to be free. We have a deep conviction that "resistance to tyranny is obedience to law." And on that

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<sup>1</sup>The same words might be applied during the Oil Scandal.

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conviction we have stood for three centuries. Time and experience have but strengthened our belief that it is sound."

### FROM SPEECH *AFTER* RE-ELECTION AS GOVERNOR — NOVEMBER 4, 1919

"Three words tell the result. Massachusetts is American. The election will be a welcome demonstration to the Nation and to people everywhere who believe that liberty can only be secured by obedience to law."

### FROM ADDRESS AT BANQUET, REPUBLICAN CLUB OF MASSACHUSETTS, IN HONOR OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION — AUGUST 12, 1920

". . .The times are troubled. People are in a ferment. Unrest prevails at home. Discord is too prevalent abroad. No man and no party ought to be rash enough to promise the performance of plans so long in advance. It is a time when all must feel their way from day to day. But this is no excuse for failure to do our best. In fact it is the uncertainty, whether men will continue to do their best, that raises doubts as to the future, in the public estimation. Where there will be doubt, there will be hesitation, there may be local disorders, but the heart of America is sound. Her people as a whole understand and believe in her institutions, because they are their own, with a faith and a loyalty never surpassed by the people of any other country. They would not need to be urged to defend their birthright, they are looking for the chance.

# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

"There is one other lesson that has come down to us, the most important of all. While there ought to be no limit to the duty of obedience to law, there is a very distinct limit as to what can be accomplished by law, and the agency of the government. The finer things of life are given voluntarily by the individual or they are not given at all. The law can impress the body but the mind is beyond control."

## EXCERPTS FROM ANNUAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS DECEMBER 6, 1923

### HARDING

"Since the close of the last Congress the Nation has lost President Harding. The world knew his kindness and his humanity, his greatness and his character. He has left his mark upon history. He has made justice more certain and peace more secure."

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

"Our country has definitely refused to adopt and ratify the covenant of the League of Nations. We have not felt warranted in assuming the responsibilities which its members have assumed. I am not proposing any change in this policy; neither is the Senate. The incident, so far as we are concerned, is closed. The League exists as a foreign agency. We hope it will be helpful. But the United States sees no reason to limit its own freedom and independence of action by joining it. We shall do well to recognize this basic fact in all national affairs and govern ourselves accordingly."

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### WORLD COURT

"For nearly 25 years we have been a member of The Hague Tribunal, and have long sought the creation of a permanent World Court of Justice. I am in full accord with both of these policies. I favor the establishment of such a court intended to include the whole world. That is, and has long been, an American policy."

### FISCAL CONDITIONS

"For seven years the people have borne with uncomplaining courage the tremendous burden of national and local taxation. These must both be reduced. The taxes of the Nation must be reduced now as much as prudence will permit, and expenditures must be reduced accordingly. High taxes reach everywhere and burden everybody. They bear most heavily upon the poor. They diminish industry and commerce. They make agriculture unprofitable. They increase the rates of transportation. They are a charge on every necessary of life. Of all services which the Congress can render to the country, I have no hesitation in declaring this one to be paramount. To neglect it, to postpone it, to obstruct it by unsound proposals, is to become unworthy of public confidence and untrue to public trust. The country wants this measure to have the right of way over all others."

### ARMY AND NAVY

"The Army is a guarantee of the security of our citizens at home; the Navy is a guarantee of the security of our citizens abroad. Both of these services should be strengthened rather than weakened."



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## IMMIGRATION

"America must be kept American. For this purpose, it is necessary to continue a policy of restricted immigration. It would be well to make such immigration of a selective nature with some inspection at the source, and based either on a prior census or upon the record of naturalization."

## VETERANS

"No more important duty falls on the Government of the United States than the adequate care of its veterans. Those suffering disabilities incurred in the service must have sufficient hospital relief and compensation. Their dependents must be supported. . .

"The American Legion will present to the Congress a legislative program too extensive for detailed discussion here. It is a carefully matured plan. While some of it I do not favor, with much of it I am in hearty accord, and I recommend that a most painstaking effort be made to provide remedies for any defects in the administration of the present laws which their experience has revealed. The attitude of the Government toward these proposals should be one of generosity. But I do not favor the granting of a bonus."

## AGRICULTURE

"Aided by the sound principles adopted by the Government, the business of the country has had an extraordinary revival. Looked at as a whole, the Nation is in the enjoyment of remarkable prosperity. Industry and commerce are thriving. For the most part agriculture is successful, eleven staples having risen in value from about \$5,300,000,000 two years ago to about \$7,000,000,000 for the current year.

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But range cattle are still low in price, and some sections of the wheat area, notably Minnesota, North Dakota, and the west, have many cases of actual distress. With his products not selling on a parity with the products of industry, every sound remedy that can be devised should be applied for the relief of the farmer. He represents a character, a type of citizenship, and a public necessity that must be preserved and afforded every facility for regaining prosperity.

"The distress is most acute among those wholly dependent upon one crop. Wheat acreage was greatly expanded and has not yet been sufficiently reduced. A large amount is raised for export, which has to meet the competition in the world market of large amounts raised on land much cheaper and much more productive.

"No complicated scheme of relief, no plan for Government fixing of prices, no resort to the public Treasury will be of any permanent value in establishing agriculture. Simple and direct methods put into operation by the farmer himself are the only real sources for restoration.

"Indirectly the farmer must be relieved by a reduction of national and local taxation. He must be assisted by the reorganization of the freight-rate structure which could reduce charges on his production. To make this fully effective there ought to be railroad consolidations. Cheaper fertilizers must be provided.

"He must have organization. His customer with whom he exchanges products of the farm for those of industry is organized, labor is organized, business is organized, and there is no way for agriculture to meet this unless it, too, is organized. The acreage of wheat is too large. Unless we can meet the world market at a profit, we must stop raising for export. Organization would help to reduce acreage. Systems

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of co-operative marketing created by the farmers, themselves, supervised by competent management, without doubt would be of assistance, but they can not wholly solve the problem. Our agricultural schools ought to have thorough courses in the theory of organization and co-operative marketing.

"Diversification is necessary. Those farmers who raise their living on the land are not greatly in distress. Such loans as are wisely needed to assist buying stock and other materials to start in this direction should be financed through a Government agency as a temporary and emergency expedient.

"The remaining difficulty is the disposition of exportable wheat. I do not favor the permanent interference of the Government in this problem. That probably would increase the trouble by increasing production. But it seems feasible to provide Government assistance to exports, and authority should be given the War Finance Corporation to grant, in its discretion, the most liberal terms of payment for fats and grains exported for the direct benefit of the farm."

### SO - CALLED MIDNIGHT STATEMENT ON THE TEAPOT DOME LEASES, JANUARY 27, 1924

"It is not for the President to determine criminal guilt or render judgment in several causes. That is the function of the courts. It is not for him to prejudge. I shall do neither. But when facts are revealed to me that require action for the purpose of insuring the enforcement of either civil or criminal liability, such action will be taken. That is the province of the executive.

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"Acting under my direction, the Department of Justice has been observing the course of the evidence which has been revealed at the hearings conducted by the senatorial committee investigating certain oil leases made on naval reserves, which, I believe, warrants action for the purpose of enforcing the law and protecting the rights of the public. This is confirmed by reports made to me from the committee. If there has been any crime, it must be prosecuted. If there has been any property of the United States illegally transferred or leased, it must be recovered.

"I feel the public is entitled to know that in the conduct of such actions no one is shielded for any party, political or other reasons. As I understand, men are involved who belong to both political parties, and, having been advised by the Department of Justice that it is in accord with former precedents, I propose to employ special counsel of high rank drawn from both political parties to bring such actions for the enforcement of the law. Counsel will be instructed to prosecute these cases in the courts so that if there is any guilt it will be punished; if there is any civil liability it will be enforced; if there is any fraud it will be revealed, and if there are any contracts which are illegal they will be canceled. Every law will be enforced, and every right of the people and the government will be protected."

### PRESIDENT'S REPLY TO SENATE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY DENBY FEBRUARY 11, 1924

No official recognition can be given to the passage of the Senate resolution relative to their opinion con-

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

cerning members of the Cabinet or other officers under Executive control.

As soon as special counsel can advise me as to the legality of these leases and assemble for me the pertinent facts in the various transactions, I shall take such action as seems essential for the full protection of the public interests. I shall not hesitate to call for the resignation of any official whose conduct in this matter in any way warrants such action upon my part. The dismissal of an officer of the Government, such as is involved in this case, other than by impeachment, is exclusively an executive function. I regard this as a vital principle of our Government.

In discussing this principle, Mr. Madison has well said:

"It is laid down in most of the constitutions or bills of rights in the republics of America: It is to be found in the political writings of the most celebrated civilians, and is everywhere held as essential to the preservation of liberty, that the three great departments of government be kept separate and distinct."

President Cleveland likewise states the correct principle in discussing requests and demands made by the Senate upon him and upon different departments of the Government in which he said:

"They assume the right of the Senate to sit in judgment upon the exercise of my exclusive discretion and an executive function, for which I am solely responsible to the people from whom I have so lately received the sacred trust of office.

"My oath to support and defend the Constitution, my duty to the people who have chosen me to execute the powers of their great office and not to relinquish them, and my duty to the Chief Magistracy, which I must preserve unimpaired in all its dignity and



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vigor, compel me to refuse compliance with these demands."

The President is responsible to the people for his conduct relative to the retention or dismissal of public officials. I assume to that responsibility, and the people may be assured that as soon as I can be advised so that I may act with entire justice to all parties concerned and fully protect the public interests, I shall act.

*I do not propose to sacrifice any innocent man for my own welfare, nor do I propose to retain in office any unfit man for my own welfare.* I shall try to maintain the functions of the government unimpaired, to act upon the evidence and the law as I find it, and to deal thoroughly and summarily with every kind of wrong doing.

In the meantime, such steps have been taken and are being taken as fully to protect the public interests.

### FROM NEW YORK ADDRESS, ON LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY 1924

#### AGRICULTURE

"What I am most anxious to impress upon the prosperous part of our country is the utmost necessity that they should be willing to make sacrifice for the assistance of the unsuccessful part."

#### INTERNATIONAL DEBTS

"Every reasonable effort has been made to secure the liquidation of our international debts. \* \* \* The funding of the British debt was one of the greatest of international financial transactions."



# THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

## SMALL TAXPAYER

"I agree perfectly with those who wish to relieve the small taxpayer by getting the largest possible contribution from the people with large incomes. But if the rates on large incomes are so high that they disappear, the small taxpayer will be left to bear the entire burden. If, on the other hand, the rates are placed where they will produce the most revenue from large incomes, then the small taxpayer will be relieved. The experience of the Treasury Department and the opinion of the best experts place the rate which will collect most from the people of great wealth, thus giving the largest relief to people of moderate wealth, at not over 25 per cent. . .

"If we had a tax whereby on the first working day the government took 5 per cent of your wages, on the second day 10 per cent, on the third day 20 per cent, on the fourth day 30 per cent, on the fifth day 50 per cent, and on the sixth day 60 per cent, how many of you would continue to work on the last two days of the week? It is the same with capital. Surplus income will go into tax-exempt securities. It will refuse to take the risk incidental to embarking in business. This will raise the rate which established business will have to pay for new capital, and result in a marked increase in the cost of living. If new capital will not flow into competing enterprise the present concerns tend toward monopoly, increasing again the prices which the people must pay."

## MEXICO

"After a long period of shifting and what appeared to us to be unsubstantial governments in that country, we recently reached the opinion that President Obregon has established a government which is stable and effective, and disposed to observe international

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obligations. We therefore recognized it. When disorder arose there, President Obregon sought the purchase of a small amount of arms and munitions of our government, for the purpose of insuring his own domestic tranquillity. We had either to refuse or to comply. To refuse would have appeared to be equivalent to deciding that a friendly government, which we had recognized, ought not to be permitted to protect itself."

### TEAPOT DOME

"I want no hue and cry, no mingling of innocent and guilty in unthinking condemnation, no confusion of mere questions of law with questions of fraud and corruption. It is at such a time that the quality of our citizenry is tested—unrelenting toward evil, fair-minded and intent upon the requirements of due process, the shield of the innocent and the safeguard of society itself. I ask the support of our people, as chief magistrate, intent on the enforcement of our laws without fear or favor, no matter who is hurt or what the consequences.

"Distressing as this situation has been, it has its reassuring side. The high moral standards of the people were revealed by their instant reaction against wrongdoing. The officers of the government, without respect to party, have demonstrated a common purpose to protect government property and to bring guilt to justice. We have the trials and perplexities of our day, but they seem insignificant compared with those which taxed the genius of Lincoln. The government maintained itself then; the government will maintain itself now. The forces of evil do not long triumph. The power of justice can not long be delayed. The moral force of Lincoln is with us still. 'He that Keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.' "

## Appendix B

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After the Boston Police Strike chapter had appeared in magazine form, certain of ex-Mayor Peter's friends reasserted that they were "tired of seeing Coolidge deified" for things he had not done, and that Peters had not been given proper credit for promptness in putting down the strike. Neither assertion was made in the text; nor do we think either interpretation justified. It was clearly stated that (a) praise for endeavor to prevent the strike (by compromise) should go to Peters; that Coolidge firmly backed up his police commissioner in refusing to compromise; (b) that after the strike broke Peters acted with all possible speed; (c) but that Coolidge became famous because he saw and clearly stated the fundamental issues and because he rang the bell of public opinion. These assertions we adhere to and repeat.

That Peters took proper precautions is manifested in the following letter:—

CITY OF BOSTON,

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR, BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 25, 1919.

MR. JAMES J. STORROW, *Chairman Citizens' Committee, 44 State Street, Boston, Mass.:*

DEAR MR. STORROW,—I have just received your letter of September 25, in which you request

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that I outline the essence of my conference with Commissioner Curtis on the morning of Tuesday, September 9, in order that you may incorporate this statement in your report. The facts concerning this conference were as follows:

On September 9, at about one o'clock, I visited the commissioner at his office in Pemberton square and was assured by him that he had the situation well in hand and had ample means at his disposal for the protection of the city. I asked him whether he did not think he ought to have the State Guard ready for emergencies, and he replied that he did not need it and did not want it.

I then suggested to the commissioner that the Governor's consideration of the question of protection for the city should then be asked. He replied that it was not necessary, but he consented to see the Governor with me. At the conference in the afternoon with the Governor the same ground was gone over again. The Police Commissioner reiterated his assurances that he had the situation in hand and had made ample provision, and again stated that he did not need or want the State Guard.

Very truly yours,  
ANDREW J. PETERS, *Mayor*.

Space has already been given to the report of Governor Coolidge's Secretary, Commissioner Long. The following excerpts of a letter to the writer from E. V. B. Parke, Secretary to Mayor Peters, at the time of the strike emphasizes the speed with which Peters acted:

Dear Mr. Green:—

"There can be no controversy as to who acted first. Acting under the authority given him by

## THE LIFE OF CALVIN COOLIDGE

the statutes, the first thing Wednesday morning Peters had the three commanding officers of those military units within Boston in his office and by nine o'clock they were in touch with their various subordinates getting their commands together. . .

"I doubt whether you have ever heard of what I am now going to tell you. Monday night, the evening before the police went out, there was a conference at the Union Club. It lasted late. A number of Storrow's Committee were there, as well as the Governor, Henry Long, Henry A. Wyman who was then either attorney general or the acting attorney general, I have forgotten which, the Mayor and myself.

"It was explained very fully to the Governor, what the situation was and it was pointed out that a very grave situation might arise were not troops in readiness for any eventuality. The Governor simply kept repeating one general thought and that was that the Police Commissioner, he felt sure, had the situation well in hand and that he would not interfere. . ."

Here is part of another letter from Mr. Parke:

"I was in the office shortly after eight that morning. (The morning after the strike.) I came early because after midnight or rather should I say that at two o'clock that same morning I had talked with the Mayor over the phone, told him what was up and he directed me to have certain officers of the State militia in the office that morning when he got there, so that there might be no delay in getting things going, if the occasion for the action was still there. Before nine Colonel Thomas F. Sullivan of the Regiment which was within the confines of the City, Colonel



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Decrow of the Motor Corps, and some one else, I have now forgotten who it was, were in the office before nine, Mayor Peters having come in some time previous.

"Precepts were immediately drawn ordering out the Boston regiment, the Motor Corps and the Ambulance Corps, as was also a request to the Governor to call out three additional regiments. An order had been drawn the night before providing for the Mayor to take over the Police Department. While the precepts were being drawn, or rather being put into final form by stenographers, I was endeavoring to get the Governor's office and the Adjutant General's office on the telephone.

"It was not such a simple matter to reach them. I finally, at about nine-thirty reached Long and told him that at that time, a request was being prepared for the Governor to call out three outside regiments. He suggested that I talk with the Adjutant General's office about the form of the request. This I did, and the request as it went to the Governor was written as the Adjutant General directed. The mention of 5 o'clock was on the direction of the A. G. O. and not related to us in any way.

"Now about the order taking over control of the Police Department. Please bear in mind that I personally saw to the preparation and delivery of every letter in connection with this affair and also to the receiving of every communication during these days.

"The letter to the Police Commissioner taking over the control of the Police Department, left our office not later than quarter of ten. It was delivered at Police Headquarters by a police offi-



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cer not later than ten o'clock. The letter from the Police Commissioner to the Mayor with the request for troops reached our office at ten-thirty, as the stamp on it will show, and at the same time came a letter from the Police Commissioner acknowledging the receipt of the Mayor's letter taking control of the Department, and signifying the Commissioner's readiness and willingness to take his further orders from the Mayor. A mere cursory examination of the report of the Committee of thirty-four will bear this out, for the letters in the report were arranged chronologically and only after notice was taken of the stamp of the time recording machine on the letters.

"But to return to the Governor. The request to him for additional regiments left our office at about ten o'clock, and was delivered to Long who personally receipted for it. . .

"The letter from the Governor to the Mayor saying that the former was awaiting the latter's request for troops reached the Mayor's office more than an hour after our letter had been delivered to the Governor's secretary."

Yours very sincerely,

E. V. B. PARKE

## Appendix C

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The following notes on the Presidential Nomination in 1920 are from a statement prepared for this biography by General John H. Sherburne, who was Chairman of the Coolidge Reorganization Committee at Chicago:

"When the Convention met, Speaker Gillette made a nominating speech seconded by Mrs. Alexander Carlisle Pfeiffer. About twenty delegates had pledged themselves, with one or two reservations for one or two ballots, to stand by Coolidge until it was definitely decided that there was no further use in so doing. A few other delegates, including Senator Lodge, agreed to vote for Coolidge on the first two or three ballots. The Wood people exerted great pressure upon the Coolidge delegates but the other candidates made virtually no efforts. The Coolidge vote dropped somewhat after the third ballot, but a bare majority of the Massachusetts delegation always supported Coolidge.

"On Friday night it was obvious that neither Wood nor Lowden could win and a meeting of the Massachusetts delegation was called for Saturday morning at the Congress Hotel, at which Mr. Gillette presided and at which Mr. Sherburne made a strenuous effort

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to unite the whole Massachusetts delegation for Coolidge for at least three ballots, an effort which would probably have been successful had not word been received from Senator Lodge that a conference had been held during the night and that the delegates should vote just as they had on the preceding day.

"On Saturday morning the drift to Harding began, and on the ballot on which Harding was nominated, the Massachusetts delegation divided its vote equally between Coolidge and Harding. As soon as Harding's nomination was assured, several of the Massachusetts delegates, Mr. William F. Whiting, Mr. John H. Sherburne and Mr. William H. Root, who had been a Wood delegate, spoke to Senator Crane and Speaker Gillette in regard to nominating Coolidge as Vice President. It was the opinion of the two latter gentlemen that the Massachusetts delegation which had fought for Coolidge for the principal office should not do anything, and it was their belief that the leaders of the Convention had decided upon Senator Lenroot as Mr. Harding's running mate, but they put no objection in the way of the nomination of Mr. Coolidge and a call poll of the delegation found that it would almost to a man support Mr. Coolidge for Vice President.

"Messrs. Whiting, Root and Sherburne then went back into the Convention Hall to talk to other delegations. At this time the nominating speeches for Allen of Kansas were being made. Among many of the delegations there was an instant demand to know why Coolidge was not being nominated. The situation of the Massachusetts delegation as expressed by Messrs. Crane and Gillette was explained, and in several of the delegations the best way of putting Coolidge's name before the Convention was being discussed, when Mr. McCamant stood up in his place on the Con-

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vention floor and made the nomination. Delegate after delegate from the various States which had been anxious to see Coolidge nominated followed Mr. McCamant and seconded the nomination of Coolidge, and there is no doubt that had McCamant not made the nomination, other delegations would have done so. Within a very brief time it was obvious that the Convention was in favor of Mr. Coolidge, and although the formality of a ballot was gone through it was obvious from the start that Mr. Coolidge would win by a large majority.

"The men who had worked so hard for Coolidge during the preceding week were not in any way elated by the action of the Convention in choosing him as Vice President. Their feeling was one of great regret that they had failed to achieve for him the presidential nomination, and from the enthusiasm which was shown toward Coolidge they felt that if the Convention had been free from the domination of certain old-line politicians, there would have been an excellent opportunity of nominating him for the first position."











# DATE DUE

OCT 17 '78	SEP 8 '02		
OCT 17 '78			
APR 3 '78			
DEC 21 '78			
DEC 9 '82			
DEC 9 '90			
JAN 14 '94			
NOV 13 '94			
MAY 13 '94			
DEC 12 '94			
DEC 11 '90			
MAR 3 '90			
FEB 26 '90			
MAY 4 '90			
MAY 6 '98			
OCT 13 '90			
OCT 7 '96			
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